

Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2025, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81838157287?pwd=XP8TrHzUDmB4B3Eoq7qGWCIYyOCNah.1>

Meeting ID: 818 3815 7287

Passcode: 333696

Meeting Objectives:

- Draw connections between Transition Advisory Council and workgroup conversations
- Continue to review and discuss regional listening session preliminary findings and ChiByDesign themes
- Identify themes that resonate and are missing, and discuss short-term ideas
- Discuss next steps for workgroup (e.g., name of workgroup)

Agenda:

Welcome, agenda and connector	10 minutes
Early Intervention update	10 minutes
Preliminary findings and December meeting ideas	10 minutes
Themes and ideas by participant role	20 minutes
Public comment	5 minutes
Next steps	5 minutes

Padlet (for use during meeting):

For workgroup members-

<https://padlet.com/erin674/ChildrenwithSpecialNeeds>

For members of the public-

<https://padlet.com/erin674/ChildrenwithSpecialNeedsPublicComment>

Participants:

Laura Lindsey

Lakeesha James

Sanna Jesse

Kesha Harris

Talibah Moore

Yesenia Perez

Kim Nelson

Michelle Olivarez-O'Shea

Benny Delgado

Johnna Darragh-Ernst

Janice Moenster

Summary

In the meeting, Erin welcomed everyone and outlined the agenda for the workgroup meeting. She introduced a new member, Kesha Harris, and shared the community agreements for the group. The meeting then transitioned to a discussion about Early Intervention updates and the new cost model report, with Ann Whalen presenting. The conversation continued and focused on preliminary findings from engagement sessions across the state and the development of short-term solutions. Time was allocated for public comment and the discussion of next steps for the following meeting in February.

Welcome, agenda and connector

Erin welcomed everyone and discussed the importance of connecting the dots across the various workgroups and Transition Advisory Committee (TAC). She introduced a new visual that has been shared with the Transition Advisory Committee and the workgroup, highlighting the roles of Johnna, Janice, Kesha, and Lakeesha as TAC

members. Erin emphasized the workgroup's responsibility to understand the current state for children with disabilities and delays, and to envision the future needs of families and providers. She also highlighted the workgroup's role in connecting with other support workgroups, including Data, Analytics & Insights and Funding Design. Three TAC members shared their insights on connecting the dots between the TAC and the workgroup, emphasizing the importance of universal and targeted supports for families. Kesha added that the workgroup's role is to bring family voices back to the committee and connect all the necessary services for families.

Early Intervention Cost Model Update

Erin discusses the Early Intervention cost model report that the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Afton completed. Ann provided an update on the report that has been released. However, Ann notes that the context has changed with the new Department of Early Childhood, so the report's findings need further examination. DHS and the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC) will propose a co-design process to dive deeper into opportunities for improving the entire birth-to-three service system, including engaging specific communities. This proposal will be shared with the workgroups next month for feedback. Erin expresses excitement about collaborating with the Transition Advisory Committee and other workgroups on this initiative.

Preliminary findings and ideas

Erin discussed the three family-focused themes: accessible and affordable services, communication and coordination for cohesive support, and consistent and culturally responsive relationships. She highlighted the alignment between the regional listening sessions, other engagements, and the ChiByDesign report. Erin also discussed the solutions proposed by parents, including bridging digital and physical infrastructure, advancing communication and information, focusing on cross-sector collaboration, prioritizing family well-being, and investing in the workforce. She then referenced the work done in December centered on the parent perspectives and opened conversation to discuss the provider experience, focusing on access and affordability, communication and coordination, and consistent and culturally responsive relationships. Erin concluded by asking for feedback and suggestions from the attendees.

Erin led a discussion on various challenges faced by early childhood programs, including workforce shortages, communication and coordination issues, and funding constraints. One workgroup member shared her experience of navigating these challenges in her school district, highlighting the importance of communication and support from the district and school board. She also discussed the need for guidance on blending and braiding of funding. A parent and workgroup member expressed concerns about the lack of consistency in funding, teacher qualifications, and services across different programs, emphasizing the need for equity in early childhood education. The discussion also touched on the issue of background checks, which can take up to 3 to 6 months, impacting hiring and staffing. The team agreed on the need for a professional development system to support the diverse needs of children and to address emerging needs.

Erin continued the discussion about the importance of equity and the need to streamline processes for those navigating the system, particularly those who may not have started from birth.

Public comment

A participant shared her personal experience raising a child with autism and the challenges she faced. Recommendations were shared on the members of the public Padlet.

Wrap-up

Erin encouraged all participants to share their thoughts and feedback, including concerns about the name of the workgroup. She also announced that the next meeting would focus on Early Intervention and would involve the Data Analytics and Insights workgroup. Erin thanked everyone for their participation and promised to be in touch soon with further information.

Next steps

- Workgroup members to add thoughts on what's resonating and missing from the themes discussed to the Padlet or email Erin.
- Workgroup members to provide feedback on the name of the workgroup if they have concerns.
- Erin to send workgroup members the Early Intervention cost model report and related materials.

- Erin to provide workgroup members with specific questions ahead of the next meeting regarding report and data.
- Erin to set up optional meetings with workgroup members who need to walk through the early intervention report.