

Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2025, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83396816754?pwd=ICETEI8091i7ClxmXqp2bmml57bne.1>

Meeting ID: 833 9681 6754

Passcode: 555945

Phone: 301-715-8592

Meeting Objectives:

- Provide updates on Transition Advisory Committee and workgroup conversations
- Share Early Intervention cost model highlights from Feb. 13
- Discuss initial family perspective feedback
- Discuss birth – age 3 proposal and make recommendations

Agenda:

Welcome, agenda and connector	10 minutes
Transition Advisory Committee update	5 minutes
Cost model and family perspective feedback	15 minutes
Birth-3 proposal	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>

Welcome, agenda, and connector

Erin welcomed participants to the meeting and outlined the agenda, which included an announcement, past work, the Early Intervention cost model, family insights, and a future birth-3 co-design opportunity. Erin also shared community agreements and asked work group members and then handed over the meeting to Ann Whalen for the announcement.

Governor's Proposed Budget

Ann announced the Governor's proposed budget for early childhood programs and services, which includes an increase for Early Intervention. Erin then discussed the work group's goal to make Illinois the best state for raising a family, focusing on simplifying the system, advancing equity, and increasing access to services. She highlighted the importance of reducing bureaucracy and allocating resources more equitably. Erin also mentioned the group's focus on the birth to 3 system, using the Early Intervention cost model as a foundation for redesigning the system while emphasizing the need to think beyond just funding the status quo and to consider redesigning the system to better support children, families, and practitioners.

Cost Model and Family Perspectives

Erin discussed the past and present concerns of families regarding the early care and education system. She highlighted the complexities of the system, particularly for families with children with disabilities, and the difficulty in navigating it. Erin shared a potential solution that parents discussed - the creation of an accessible online portal and funding navigators as potential solutions. She also mentioned the lack of consistent information, long waiting lists, and a lack of professional development as concerns. Erin emphasized that these were not the final solutions but starting points for discussion. She also mentioned the perception of issues with the background check process and the potential financial strain on families due to waiting lists.

Transition Advisory Committee/workgroup members shared their thoughts. The discussion focused on clarifying the representation of individual perspectives and the shift from in-person to virtual services due to the shortage of EI therapists. One parent highlighted the challenges families face in balancing the cost of services and childcare, as well as navigating the insurance system. The team agreed to further discuss these issues and consider additional points for future meetings.

The group discusses the importance of gathering different perspectives to understand current family needs and optimize the family experience in the birth-to-5 system. One member suggests categorizing barriers into operational and structural changes to create a comprehensive approach. The discussion touches on funding issues, with another member

emphasizing the lack of funding and providers as a major concern. Erin clarifies the work group's focus on identifying family needs, particularly for families with children with disabilities and delays, while collaborating with other work groups on funding and data. The conversation also highlights the need to consider regional differences and improve awareness of early intervention services among pediatricians.

Ann expressed appreciation for the Early Intervention team's work and emphasized the need to align processes and systems with the needs of parents and families as they transition to a new state agency. It was suggested that anchoring their discussions to their original purpose and focusing on actionable steps to develop recommendations. Erin agreed and shared a proposal for increasing access to birth to 3 services, emphasizing the need for differentiation based on region and community needs.

Due to technical issues, the meeting ended early.

Next steps

- Workgroup members to provide feedback on the birth to 3 co-design proposal.
- Erin to schedule follow-up meeting.