Meeting Minutes

June 24, 2025 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Meeting Information:
Link: https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m13727ea2e8eb0386cd346c018ea3341d
Meeting ID: 2869 230 5153
Password: PScfggsh872
Phone: 312-535-8110

Meeting Objectives:

- Discuss and co-plan next steps of the input-gathering process.
- Give feedback on templates for collecting information from parents and caregivers.

Agenda:

Welcome, agenda and connector	10 minutes
Upcoming community events for parents/caregivers	20 minutes
Information gathering templates	15 minutes
Public comment	10 minutes
Next steps	5 minutes

Workgroup Participants:

Karen Artley-Heath	Samantha Jolliff	Talibah Moore
Johnna Darragh-Ernst	Kesha Harris	Yesenia Perez
Benny Delgado	Lakeesha Smith	
Kristy Doan	Theenshina Mayfield	

Welcome & Introductions

Erin Arango-Escalante (meeting facilitator) welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided the agenda for the day, which included upcoming community conversations planning and information gathering templates. Erin also reminded everyone of the community agreements developed by the workgroup members. Participants shared some memories about educators in their lives.

Upcoming community events for parents/caregivers

Erin Arango-Escalante (facilitator) presented and shared:

- A reminder of the multi-step plan to develop a strategic plan (shared in prior meetings), presented by Ann Whalen from IDEC.
- A family portrait is a set of descriptions of characteristics, perspectives, and experiences of a family with at least one child in the 0-5 age range.
- The idea of capturing portraits is to understand details and nuances about these families so that we can use them to think about how changes to policies, programs, and systems may impact them.
- Various workgroups will use the portraits to review every proposed strategy or solution through the lens of this family's experience. Some guiding questions for this process could include:
  - What would be the impact of this proposed change on this family?
  - Would this family benefit from the change? If so, how?
  - What might prevent this family from benefitting from the change?
  - Would this solution be easy for this family to access? Why or why not?
  - Is this solution a high priority for this family?
  - What other solutions might have a greater impact on this child/family?
- Community Conversations will allow us to gather rich information in communities—by place like a neighborhood, in a virtual community, or across a network.
  - We will start by gathering the stories and experiences of families through these conversations.
  - We will think about the whole child and family in the context of the community, for example: their successes and how they achieved them; their challenges, frustrations, and worries; their hopes, wishes, and future needs; their day-to-day lives and routines; the people and places in their community that influence their lives; how they experience the many transitions that occur in early childhood; how culture, values, and identities are influenced and shaped
  - We don't want it tied to the current system, its structure, its flaws, or our notions of how things are/should be.

- Today is the first step of starting to develop family portraits.
- Next, we will hold Community Conversations in July.
- Then we will gather feedback on draft portraits from workgroups, the IDEC team, etc.
- Later in July, we will present the portraits to the TAC.
- The Support Workgroups would begin working with the portraits.
- Finally, we will host additional Community Conversations later in the summer to talk more about the proposed strategies and solutions and talk more with parents and families about how they would be impacted by proposed changes.
- This process will be flowing in an iterative fashion, taking materials to different groups, then taking them back for additional review and discussion.

Discussion:

- One member asked if parent leaders would have a slide deck to introduce ideas to communities, if they are willing to step up to lead this.
  - Erin: Yes, we will work to come up with a plan and what is needed for this.
- Erin further prompted the workgroup to think about what opportunities might exist to engage parents/caregivers in your communities: which communities, demographics, places, and networks are not often included in sharing their stories.
- One member asked for clarification if the family portraits are based on our (member) stories or others we will talk to in the community conversations.
  - These can be anonymous so it might be a combination of all of those. We want to create portraits that represent many of the stories we hear and combine them into a set that is representative of the diversity of families in the state.
- Ann Whalen reminded that IDEC seeks to avoid designing innovations for the typical or "average" family but rather, we want to think about the diverse needs of families with you children across the state and their different entry points into the system. We need to ask questions about how these families would be served, what barriers might they experience? etc. We want to be sure that we think beyond just what happened to a family when they accessed one program or service, but we need to think bigger picture around surrounding issues like transportation, getting to work and having care, getting to the doctor when needed, etc. We need to think about our funding model in light of these portraits and have deep conversations about the families' full experiences and do that for many families we serve by having multiple representative portraits, and particularly representing those who are least well served.
- A member reiterated and wanted to check their understanding that we want to understand full experiences, routines, etc. As we are gathering these experiences, we did engagement with other families in the past and they wondered if we would be using a similar process to ensure we have representation across the state and different populations.

- o Erin agreed that we will need multiple efforts and pointed out that this dovetails with what ChiByDesign is doing with the deep dives in two communities. We may do place-based conversations but also networks across the state. Erin asked where are the families furthest from opportunity who we may not have met with yet?
- Another member talked about how ChiByDesign is doing deep work in two communities, so asking if the purpose of this group is to create portraits by talking to people in other communities?
    - o Erin explained that the processes will be different but complementary. ChiByDesign won't be creating portraits like we will, so our processes will converge to support the planning and decisions coming up.
- A member asked if the workgroup members will lead/facilitate the Community Conversations.
    - o Members have the options to provide the community connections and make a handoff to Erin & Andrea at All Children Thrive to follow up. Additionally, members may want to lead and facilitate some of this with All Children Thrive. It's up to each individual person here how they want to be involved, all are invited to be involved as you are able and willing.

Information gathering templates

Members received two templates in advance of the meeting:

- My Caregiving Experience
- A Common Day for My Child

Erin asked:

- How did it go for you to complete a template?
- Was there anything confusing or difficult for you to answer?
- What would you edit or change in the templates?
- Will these templates help us gather information that will be helpful for creating portraits?

Discussion:

- One member did not have a chance to complete the templates but thought it was really good work. They told about a recent meeting on the topic of early child care, and they tried to share in that meeting the difficulties of parents moving children from program to program. They shared their personal story of their child who will be 4 in April, and this fall he will be entering his fourth program. They shared the reasoning and the ways

that the system causes issues for people like their family. Afterwards, people were coming up to say this resonated with them and they understood it more clearly what families go through. Therefore, they agreed with the approach of pushing for more sharing of stories.

- One member responded: "I read over it and I loved how it asks the hopes and needs and how it can show a wide range of information all in one place."
- Another member wrote: "Day to day activities are a lot for my family…. And being able to write it out is like WOW I really have a lot going on not to mention working full time and running a business."
- Another member wrote: "I think is a great start to helping creating a system that will allow us to capture the needs of families."

Public Comments

None

Padlet Comments available at links below:

From workgroup members- https://padlet.com/erin674/ChildrenwithSpecialNeeds

From members of the public-
https://padlet.com/erin674/ChildrenwithSpecialNeedsPublicComment

Next Steps

- Future meetings: Tuesdays, noon-1pm (6/24, 7/22, 8/19, 9/23, 10/28, 11/18, 12/16)

- Erin will send a follow-up email asking you to submit more feedback on today's topic and the Information Gathering Templates, if you didn't get a chance to complete them yet.