

Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2025 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Agenda:

Welcome, Connector, and Updates	10 minutes
Connections across Workgroups: ChiByDesign	20 minutes
Discussion: Early Intervention Work	25 minutes
Public comment & next steps	5 minutes

Workgroup Participants:

Present	Name	Present	Name
	Africa Anderson		Samantha Jolliff
	Mindy Brant		Laura Lindsey
	Debra Draper		Janice Moenster
X	Johnna Darragh-Ernst	X	Talibah Moore
X	Karen Heath	X	Kim Nelson
X	Kesha Harris		Beatrice Nichols
	Maura Hirschauer		Michelle Olivarez-O'Shea
X	Lakeesha Smith		Yesenia Perez
X	Sanna Jesse		Lynda Williams
	Senator Adriane Johnson		

Welcome, Introductions & Context

Erin Arango-Escalante of All Children Thrive (meeting facilitator) welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided the agenda for the day, which included a presentation by ChiByDesign, a discussion about Early Intervention, and next steps. Erin also reminded everyone of the community agreements developed by the workgroup members.

Trish Rooney gave the workgroup updates. She is now a member of staff at IDEC (former staff at IDHS). She acknowledged that we have been working for 18 months. In December, a

transition will take place for the state agency members of this workgroup to participate in other workgroups and as public members, but not as full Supporting Children with Disabilities and Developmental Delays workgroup members anymore. This will create space to welcome new parents into this workgroup. New members will join us in December or January. They will offer more parent points of view to the group.

A workgroup member asked if she could share this update with other parents to invite them to the workgroup, or if that will be done by the state. Trish responded that IDEC has already reached out to some parents who expressed interest when the workgroups were forming. However, Erin emphasized that there are more opportunities for engagement as well, so those interested parents are welcome to come and share their voices in our meetings as members of the public or to get involved in other groups.

Connections Across Workgroups

Erin shared a slide from a previous meeting about how we will continue connecting the dots across workgroups. Our group is focusing on our current state of the Illinois early childhood system for families of children with disabilities and developmental delays, and we have the opportunity to share that with several other workgroups.

As an update on our previous meeting with the Funding Design workgroup leadership, there were three proposed Funding Design subcommittees discussed on that call that are now happening. Some of our workgroup members (LaKeesha and Yesenia) are joining these subcommittees.

Today, we will learn about ChiByDesign's efforts to lead a Birth to Three Sprint on Early Intervention. They want to know if what they are finding is similar or different from what we have talked about.

Justin Walker, Business Strategy and Design Operations Lead from ChiByDesign introduced himself and expressed gratitude for this opportunity to think about ways we might improve Early Intervention to better support Illinois families. He then shared information about the work that is in progress and what is coming up in the process, including:

- ChiByDesign is working with IDEC to improve services for children from birth to age 3 with a heavy focus on Early Intervention. They are co-designing a set of policy recommendations that improve service delivery to create more equitable outcomes for children and families across the state.
- ChiByDesign is centering the work within a few neighborhoods in Chicago (Auburn Gresham, South Austin, West Garfield Park) and a group of counties in Central Illinois (Henry, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, Woodford). These were selected based on service delays in these areas and other factors including disparities of resources.

- ChiByDesign is working with these communities to understand their challenges and to co-design ideas for solutions. They first conducted 25-30 conversations with parents/families, intermediaries, service coordinators, program managers, and state staff to get a better understanding of the overall ecosystem that exists for EI.
- From there, they facilitated a series of co-designed workshops (4 completed, 2 remaining) allowing people to reimagine what EI services should be in the future.
- The first workshops in October included 9 parents/caregivers, 6 providers, 7 intermediaries, and 7 state personnel. The challenges that surfaced were:
 - Even though technology makes receiving services more accessible, parents prefer in-person EI sessions, because they foster relationship building and more tangible results.
 - Providers need more training to increase their capacity to deliver quality care and more services.
 - System actors are too siloed, leading to gaps in experiences and families receiving the care they need.
 - One emerging opportunity is a centralized referral tracking system. This would support the CFCs and transparent data sharing to and from parents.
- In the next workshops in November, 8 parents/caregivers participated, along with 4 EI providers, 3 child care providers, 7 state personnel, and 8 Child & Family Connections staff. They collectively imagined a set of preferred futures where the needs of families and children are at the center. Co-designers explored ways to address current challenges across each phase of the EI journey. They proposed:
 - Enhanced support during waitlist and service delays. Some families were waiting for up to a year and were hoping for home visiting or temporary therapists and curated materials to help support their children while waiting.
 - Improved data infrastructure and system transparency to provide real-time counts of children waiting for services and provider shortages at a zip code level. Data would also be used for staffing, resources, allocation, and workforce planning.
 - Families would appreciate expanded access and flexibility for center-based services. Policies around “natural environment” should be updated to allow optional, accessible, center-based services like socialization, team-based care, and safety for providers who are hesitant to enter certain communities.
 - Extended services are needed beyond age 3 for children with gaps in services. For those that do not directly enter a school system, there should be interim transition services in place to prevent abrupt termination of services.
 - The third set of workshops will take place in early December to prototype policy infrastructures and necessary conditions to make them successful. If there is anything the ChiByDesign team should be mindful of or prioritize in that workshop, what are your ideas?

- ChiByDesign is looking for more participants in all of these communities. Dec 9 in Central Illinois and Dec. 11 in Chicago.
 - A member asked how to connect the parents to this opportunity. Justin responded that there's [a survey for them to fill out](#), then ChiByDesign would reach out to them.
 - Another ChiByDesign team member, Tommie Collins, emphasized that they particularly need participation from foster and adoptive parents.

Discussion

1. What are the similar or familiar themes that we have discussed?

- Cost of EI and need for additional support for providers, also the long wait list for services for children
- Lack of providers
- Better communication is needed
- There are data silos and gaps that can make it difficult for systems to communicate with one another
- Supporting the ECEC workforce and building out the pipeline is a consistent thread that is essential to bolster the EI system, as well as the ECEC system as a whole
- Overall themes are consistent

• What is different?

- The process and how data was organized
- The consideration of having an EI center--Many different providers coming out was tedious throughout the week, so if they could collaborate together in one space, that could be ideal—the member expressed that they liked this idea
- Local navigators (people) as opposed to utilizing only technical tracking systems has come up in our workgroup meetings
- The idea of not having an abrupt interruption of services when children age out of EI services

2. What do we want to make sure the ChiByDesign team knows as they move forward?

- Transportation for providers and parents, as well as access to car seats, has come up in our workgroup meetings in the past

Public Comment

A member of the public asked for more information on the types of training and knowledge gaps that came up in the first workshop. Justin responded that there were a number of things coming up. One was building more cultural competency among providers. Also, participants mentioned a need for greater mentorship for new providers. Finally, they heard that it would be beneficial for providers to receive more training around the transition from EI to Early

Childhood Special Education and how to engage and communicate across those systems. These are the themes he could recall off-hand.

One individual expressed that it's confusing as to why we're focusing on building in supports for families during services delays (which are against the law) rather than solving toward the actual service delay issue. Another member of the public agreed.

A member of the public commented that the lack of providers is, in part, due to low compensation and lack of compensation for windshield time and missed home visits due to parents not being home.

A public participant asked: Did you have a conversation with the Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention (IICEI) group? What did you learn? Tommie Collins from ChiByDesign responded that they did meet last month, and the meeting validated a lot of the challenges and emerging opportunities that ChiByDesign shared.

A member of the public noted that the sample size of parents in the first two workshops was pretty small, so perhaps a survey of EI families, providers, and referral sources could be useful to increase the representation of voices in ChiByDesign's work.

Next Steps

Paige Greenwood from IDEC shared several upcoming opportunities including:

- Child Care Funding Design Subcommittee: Today, Nov. 18, 1-2pm
- Transition Advisory Council: Today, Nov. 18, 5:30-7:00pm
- Funding Design Workgroup: Wed., Nov. 19, 4:30-6pm
- Supporting Multilingual Learners Workgroup: Fri, Nov. 21, 9-10am
- Advisory Workgroup: Mon, Dec. 1, 4-5:30pm
- Transition Advisory Meeting: Dec. 9, 10am-3pm
- Home Visiting Funding Design Subcommittee: Wed., Dec. 10, 11:30am-1pm

Next meeting for this workgroup: Tues., Dec. 16, noon-1pm.

A member shared that a community survey is coming up in South Austin around safety within the community. She suggested it would be great if ChiByDesign could also promote this once it becomes available in the next two weeks.

Padlet Comments available at links below:

For workgroup members- <https://padlet.com/erin674/supporting-children-with-disabilities-developmental-delays-3p26gae2e5de0gnp>

For members of the public- <https://padlet.com/erin674/supporting-children-with-disabilities-developmental-delays-p-u2ot2xuzidg4ydv0>