



Illinois Department of Early Childhood

SUPPORTING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS WORKGROUP

January 22, 2025, 3:00-4:00 p.m.



- Welcome, agenda & connector
- Early Intervention update
- Preliminary findings and December meeting ideas
- New themes and ideas
- Public comment
- Next steps

AGENDA

Community Agreements



Stay engaged



Speak your truth in a safe space



Take space, make space



Allow time for interpretation



Experience discomfort-
and name it – while being
open to new ideas



Show empathy and
respect



Expect and accept lack of
closure



Come prepared to actively
participate in meetings



Avoid the use of acronyms
and describe so everyone
understands



Be flexible



Assume Positive Intent

Introductions



- Name
- Food you absolutely won't eat

Example:

Erin Arango-Escalante, celery

Connecting the Dots Across Workgroups and TAC

Vision: What do families want and need?
What do providers want and need to deliver for families?

- Family Service Work Groups ★
- Co-Design Workshops
- Focused Discussion
- Surveys and Interviews
- Listening Sessions



How do we get from current state to our vision?
What infrastructure is needed to make the vision possible?

- Support Work Groups
- Focused Discussions
- Surveys and Interviews
- Interagency Team

Current state: what are the pain points in family services?

- Family Service Work Groups ★
- Focused Discussion
- Surveys and Interviews
- Co-Design Workshops
- Listening Sessions

TAC

Modeling the Cost of Early Intervention in Illinois: Analysis and Recommendations

Prepared by Afton Partners for the Illinois Department of Human Services –
Division of Early Childhood

November 2024



Workgroup Engagement

Workgroup Members

- <https://bit.ly/4fzjRAh>



Members of the Public

- <https://bit.ly/3UGGnzk>



Using Padlet

:Padlet



All Children Thrive + 6 • 1m

Supporting Multilingual Learners Workgroup

Share your thoughts!

12/2 Parent Feedback

All Children Thrive 4d

Theme 1: Accessible and affordable services



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+ Add comment



All Children Thrive 4d

Theme 2:
Communication and coordination for cohesive support



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+ Add comment

All Children Thrive 4d

Theme 3: Consistent and culturally responsive relationships



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+ Add comment

All Children Thrive 4d

All Themes: General Feedback



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+ Add comment

12/2 Provider, Educator, School District, &

Themes and Findings



Three family-focused themes emerged from the data

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE SERVICES

Families' experiences accessing high quality child care, home visiting, early intervention and preschool services across the state vary and many communities face barriers to accessible and affordable services.

"Costs are so high! Private providers and CBOs are struggling, and parents who don't qualify for subsidies or HS can't afford to pay." - *Parent in Cook County/Chicago*

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION FOR COHESIVE SUPPORT

Families are more likely to receive the services that will support a child's healthy development when strong relationships exist between multiple providers, state and local agencies, and intermediary organizations.

"Continue community collaborations. It is not a single person's responsibility, it's a group effort to help serve our kids. It is bigger than one person." - *Meeting convener form*

CONSISTENT AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Some families experience supportive and culturally diverse environments while others expressed a desire for more inclusive and culturally competent services and relationships.

"I really value the caring staff in early childhood services. They make it easy for my child to learn and feel safe. The clear communication and helpful resources have been great. I hope these positive experiences stay the same for all families." - *Parent in Cook County*

Three Family-Focused Themes



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TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Barriers to Early Childhood Education and Care

The co-design workshops identified significant challenges that prevent children and families from accessing quality care and learning, as well as barriers providers face in delivering services that meet their unique needs. Co-designers identified 20 key challenges hindering access, quality care, and learning delivery. These challenges must be addressed to ensure the early childhood ecosystem fully meets existing needs, anticipates and provides interventions for future demands, and fosters trust and confidence amongst all stakeholders.



Information
navigation and
accessibility



Cross-collaboration
and communication



Holistic
well-being



Professional
development and
supports



Dynamic learning
environments and
diverse learning
needs

Drivers

Illinois must continue its approach to reimagine high-quality early childhood education and care support services to achieve the desired outcomes. We propose five (5) drivers to enable the Department of Early Childhood to create equitable outcomes for children and families.



**Bridge digital and
physical
infrastructure
divides**



**Advance
communication and
information
exchange**



**Strengthen
cross-sector
collaboration**



**Prioritize holistic
family well-being**



**Invest in workforce
excellence**

Barriers for Families & Providers

- Need for understanding and navigating the complex system
- Need for better coordination between programs and local collaboration
- Transportation
- Bilingual doulas
- Lack of bilingual child care options (especially for infant care)
- Teacher and therapist shortage
- Lack of intentional language use in many settings (focus on home language)
- Misinformation about bilingual children's development

Ideas from Families & Providers

- Require consistent/common communication, resources and collaboration in preferred language (e.g., navigating system)
- Beef up communication – home language, mechanisms, technology; include comms campaign on importance of home language use
- Provide a navigator for families with a trusted local organization – single point of entry
- Cross-reference ideas with Birth to 5 initiative and AOK network
- Provide car seats to address transportation issues
- Consider funding for bilingual doulas
- Explore additional funding for CC programs who accept multilingual children
- Explore pay increases for bilingual staff

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Participants recommended improving equitable access to ECE services, especially for historically underserved groups

Participants suggested opportunities that include:

- Providing services and resources in multiple languages
- Streamlining applications
- Offering navigators or other navigation support for families to understand available resources
- Addressing transportation barriers
- Providing more equitable distribution of resources and adequate funding
- Creating shared definition of quality across funding streams
- Prioritizing including children with special needs in high-quality classrooms

"A streamlined referral process between agencies... will eliminate the need for the families to do all of the legwork independently, as well as help providers know which concerns have been identified and which supports are already in place."
- PK-12 staff in Schuyler County

Theme

1



Information navigation and accessibility



Cross-collaboration and communication



Holistic well-being



Professional development and supports



Dynamic learning environments and diverse learning needs

PRIORITIZING EQUITY: COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

RELIMINARY FINDINGS

Participants recommended creating a coordinated system that fosters collaboration across system levels

Participants suggested opportunities that include:

- Listening to families and engaging them in decision-making
- Partnering with trusted community organizations
- Leveraging local and regional strengths
- Using funding structures as a tool to incentivize collaboration
- Creating a family advisory board
- Embedding equity practices at the new agency including hiring diverse staff and leaders that reflect diverse communities and providing training on diversity, equity and inclusion, implicit bias, and cultural competency

"It's crucial to **train staff on cultural competency and bias** to ensure every family, regardless of background, feels respected and supported."

- Parent in Green County

Theme

2

PRIORITIZING EQUITY: RELATIONSHIPS

PRELIMINARY FINDING

Participants recommended strengthening and compensating the ECE workforce

Participants suggested opportunities that include:

- Recruiting a diverse workforce
- Providing training on culturally responsive professional development supporting children with special needs
- Increasing the number of staff in classrooms
- Providing adequate funding that acknowledges the value of providers' work and effort
- Supporting providers in rural areas

"Changing pay structures so that providers can be reimbursed at higher rates for working within historically disinvested and rural, isolated communities. Training providers to focus on family strengths, emphasizing engagement strategies to relate with parents and see their abilities rather than a constant default to deficit and risk mindset."

- Cook County Home Visitor

Theme

3

- What resonates with you?
- What's missing from your perspective?
- What is a short-term solution you/your organization is doing to address these issues?
- What theme are you interested in knowing more about or what questions do you have?





Public Comment

NEXT STEPS

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