

Meeting Minutes

July 25, 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Information:

Link: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=ma1956c2d5de58c0fd466b7c560c15213>

Meeting ID: 2864 356 8835

Password: MBqqSFB527

Phone: 312-535-8110

Agenda:

Welcome, connector, and updates	15 minutes
Draft Family Portraits	15 minutes
Family Portraits in Action	20 minutes
Public comment	5 minutes
Next steps	5 minutes

Workgroup Participants:

Debra DeValdivielso

Leslie Perkins

Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro

Luis Narvaez

Edgar Ramirez

Gaddys Ybarra

Michelle Ramirez

Marilyn Rodriguez

Joanne Clyde

Welcome & Introductions

Erin Arango-Escalante (meeting facilitator) welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided the agenda for the day, which included draft family portraits and how they will be used. Erin also reminded everyone of the community agreements developed by the workgroup members.

Draft Family Portraits

Erin presented and shared about the draft family portraits as follows:

- The last time we met, we talked about the concept of Family Portraits and we heard some amazing feedback about the ideas. We are now coming back to you with drafts to review and are looking for your reactions today.
- IDEC and everyone involved in the transition process is committed to deep family and community engagement. This is one way we will carry forward the outcomes of that engagement and keep families at the center of planning and development.
- A family portrait includes a set of descriptions of the characteristics, perspectives, and experiences of a family with at least one child, age 0-5. We are looking at the whole family in community and all the influences on their lives.
- A gallery of family portraits will provide realistic representations and real-life examples of families with young children, across multiple communities and in a variety of early childhood education and care settings and programs in Illinois. They portray the diversity as well as intersectionality of experiences, backgrounds, race, culture, class, gender, and other ways families have chosen to identify themselves. It's not about the "average" family, because that doesn't exist. We really want to look at families who have perhaps been underrepresented or underserved by existing systems.
- The portraits do not represent one family in particular, they have many different pieces that have been put together from things we have heard in interviews from many different families. We will show 4 of these portraits today but there will be more in the future to represent the diversity of families.
- What we share today is still draft and will be edited and updated based on feedback and additional information.

Andrea Cammilleri (co-facilitator) allowed time for the group to preview the family portraits, and pointed out the components that are part of each portrait. She then asked participants to share their overall reactions, what else should be added to the portraits, and whether or not the portraits feel respectful of families.

Family Portraits in Action

Erin emphasized that we want to be sure we are continuing to center the family experience in our planning. She explained that as ideas come up in different workgroups, we want to look at every proposed strategy or solution through the lens of each family's experience. Guiding questions for those discussions might include:

- What would be the impact of this proposed change on this family?
- Would the family benefit from the change? If so, how?
- What might prevent the family from benefitting from this 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 innovations might have greater impact on this child/family?

Discussion:

Workgroup members shared the following reactions to the draft family portraits:

- I think it's powerful to read the stories. As a public educator, I've known many families in similar situations. When it becomes a personal story, you can truly identify with them, or some part of their story. I think that helps to personalize our work more.
- I think this is very reflective of various families I know. My older sister works in affordable housing. There's careers that parents want for their kids, so I liked how the portrait referenced that they wanted him to be an engineer. There are pieces here that are very reflective of our communities. I feel all of our stories were sprinkled throughout. I do think it's respectful. My only concern I think is how exactly this is going to be used. This is a whole case study, but do we want an average family to look at this—it's a lot for families to take in.
 - Erin responded that the intended audiences right now are the workgroups and TAC. There have been some other ideas that have come up, like how the portraits could be used for training new staff. But right now, it's for IDEC transition planning purposes.
- You did a great job writing these, we've all seen families we can relate to in these situations. I like that you've included low incidence languages and different experiences. Would we want another story of someone who just arrived and is coming through a welcoming center? Could we work with a welcoming center to talk to some families in that situation?
- A member agreed with the prior comments. They made a comment about the Osman & Gedi family visual. For accessibility purposes—it was hard to differentiate the purple text from the background. Let's change to colors that are higher contrast.
 - Facilitators agreed and indicated that this will be improved in the future.
- One member raised that these portraits are obviously drawn from past experience. However, some of the systems like SNAP, Head Start, etc. are going to be harder for people to access very soon.
 - Erin acknowledged this and indicated we are still doing interviews, so we are starting to catch that.
- Related to that, a member suggested adjusting interview questions to see if families are accessing other community or non-profit benefits, perhaps from churches, mosques, and temples, to hear where they are seeking support now that other programs or benefits may not be available to them.
- Someone added to the chat: Even at food pantries, it seems that donations are diminishing as well.

- A suggestion was made to add the educational level of the parents to portraits, because we know that impacts children. We know that impacts the choices they make. We may want to find out that information about more of the families we interview.
 - Agreed, along with parent employment information.
 - Also, what about adding something about military families? Like what those dynamics can look like, such as having an absent parent while in training or at a base.
 - Consider situations where a parent is incarcerated, hospitalized, or a parent may have a disability. There are so many lived realities it's hard to name them all.
 - Nursing moms detained by ICE...this was a real story in our community, unfortunately.
 - In relation to employment, such as if they work in construction... being exposed to certain material that can have lead, can impact how little ones score on their lead exams and in the future, their overall development.
 - Include LGBTQ families.
 - An agricultural migratory farmworker family would be good to see.

Erin asked the workgroup to rate their overall reaction to the portraits on a scale of 1 (major concerns) to 4 (they're perfect!). The following responses were given:

- 3.5. I still have some questions about how they'll be used.
- 3.5 I want to say a 4 but I feel like the people in these workgroups already know this. The difference to push it up .5 is to figure out how we get this into the hands of individuals who are not as "sold" on the value of knowing the families and engaging them.
- Probably about a 2
- 3ish

A member commented that they like that many groups will be thinking of such a diverse array of family issues.

Public Comment

- I was fixated on the language portrayal in both pieces around multilingual learners. I appreciated mentions that the family code switches—I'm not sure if the public knows what code switching is, though, and use of the word 'but' in that sentence implies negativity. The term "limited English" appears—as a field, we've moved away from that language. I liked that the family was intent on retaining the Somali language. One of the pieces that's so important is that language and cultural maintenance.
- I wanted to point out that there are no downstate multilingual learners represented, both are urban. There's also no mention of Covid, and many of these children were born during Covid. You chose Somali as a language but Arabic is our second most common language.

Padlet:

For workgroup members- <https://padlet.com/erin674/SupportingMLs>

For members of the public- <https://padlet.com/erin674/MLsPublicComment>