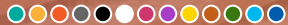


DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

NOV

12

Transforming Early Childhood Education and Care in Illinois



FINAL REPORT SHAREOUT



**It is not beyond our power to
create a world in which all children
have access to a good education.**

shareout content

Session Goals

Desired Outcomes, Drivers, and Principles

Meet the ChiByDesign Team

BREAK

Goals, Deliverables, & Methodology

Co-Designer Driven Concepts

Barriers to Accessing & Delivering Early
Childhood Education and Care

Conclusion

Q&A

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Session Goals

1

Meet the
ChiByDesign Team &
Our Design Approach

2

Barriers, Desired
Outcomes, Drivers,
and Principles

3

Co-Designer
Driven Concepts

4

Small Group
Discussions

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Meet the ChiByDesign Team

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Meet the ChiByDesign Team



Tommie Collins
Project & Visual
Communications Lead



Justin Walker
Business Strategy &
Design Operations Lead



Kendell Miller-Roberts
Design Researcher



Chris Rudd
Founder + CEO

PROJECT AND VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS LEAD

Tommie Collins

Tommie Collins is a storyteller with a designer's toolkit. His passionate work exists at the intersection of social impact, civic innovation, collaborative design, communications, and strategy. Through design research methods, Collins seeks to eliminate layered complexity and also, identify the true areas of opportunity.

His corporate experience in advertising, commercial real estate, and newspaper publishing paired with his people-centric approach to research enables him to mobilize stakeholders, building meaningful connections, and transform ideas into actions.



BUSINESS STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS LEAD

Justin Walker



Justin Walker is a strategist and designer with a primary focus on the practices of anti-racist design, co-design, and systems design. As his work and interests lie at the intersection of community-led and business design, he is constantly exploring and analyzing complex systems to understand and address societal problems.

Through Justin's experience as a management consultant, he's led change and program management and digital transformation initiatives for Fortune 500 corporations across several industries. Justin's corporate experience, combined with his design practice, allows him to solve problems creatively and build the structures for successful implementation.

DESIGN RESEARCHER

Kendell Miller-Roberts



Kendell Miller-Roberts is a human rights practitioner specializing in equity-centered design research and strategy. Her design work is dignity driven—rooted in human and ecological dignity, needs, and rights. Her praxis is community-centered with a focus on active practitioner engagement, and an orientation towards process.

Before working in design, she worked in human rights education. Kendell is also a dancer and choreographer and has trained in ballet, modern, and jazz. She is also a Senior Fellow with Humanity in Action. Kendell holds a MDes in Integrative Design from the University of Michigan, a BA in Human Rights and a BFA in Dance Performance from Southern Methodist University.

FOUNDER + CEO

Chris Rudd



Chris Rudd is a designer, community organizer, and founder of ChiByDesign, a black-owned and people-of-color-led design firm in Chicago. Chris has a deep background in social equity work, systems change, and youth development. He's worked with youth on the south and west sides of Chicago, challenging them to engage with their communities through activism and technology.

In addition to his role at ChiByDesign, Chris is also an Instructor and Lead of Community-led Design for the Chicago Design Lab at the Illinois Institute of Technology-Institute of Design (ID) where his work focuses on developing the co-design practice at ID and the anti-racist design field. Chris is a former Stanford Institute of Design (d.school) Civic Innovation fellow and a current Chicago Urban League IMPACT fellow.

THE CHIBYDESIGN APPROACH

Goals

The State of Illinois engaged ChiByDesign to facilitate a co-design approach that brought together parents and caregivers, early childhood education and care providers, and other key stakeholders to innovate early childhood service delivery and redefine early childhood education within the state based on the following objectives:



Convening diverse stakeholders to understand the conditions, policies, practices, and experiences that shape early childhood education



Co-designing anti-racist innovations with lived experts that can shape early childhood education services and practices



Building relationships between Illinois families, early childhood providers, and adjacent systems actors

THE CHIBYDESIGN APPROACH

Deliverables

ChiByDesign was engaged to:



Develop and prototype concepts that address systemic barriers impacting children, families, and providers



Identify barriers to accessing and delivering high-quality early childhood experiences

15 mins

OPENING ACTIVITY

40 mins

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE

Journey Mapping

In this activity, you will identify challenges parents and providers face along the early childhood services journey.

Recalling your experiences, you'll highlight challenges to be considered as efforts to create the state's Early Childhood Agency continue.

Challenges for Families

Challenges for Providers

WHAT is it?

WHY did you pick this?

COSTS (\$\$) up to?

Navigation

What factors can a state's research for early childhood services and supports?

Evaluate

What are the most important factors for early childhood services and supports?

Development

What are the most important factors for early childhood services and supports? (e.g., staff, etc...)

Navigation

What are the most important factors for early childhood services and supports? (e.g., staff, etc...)

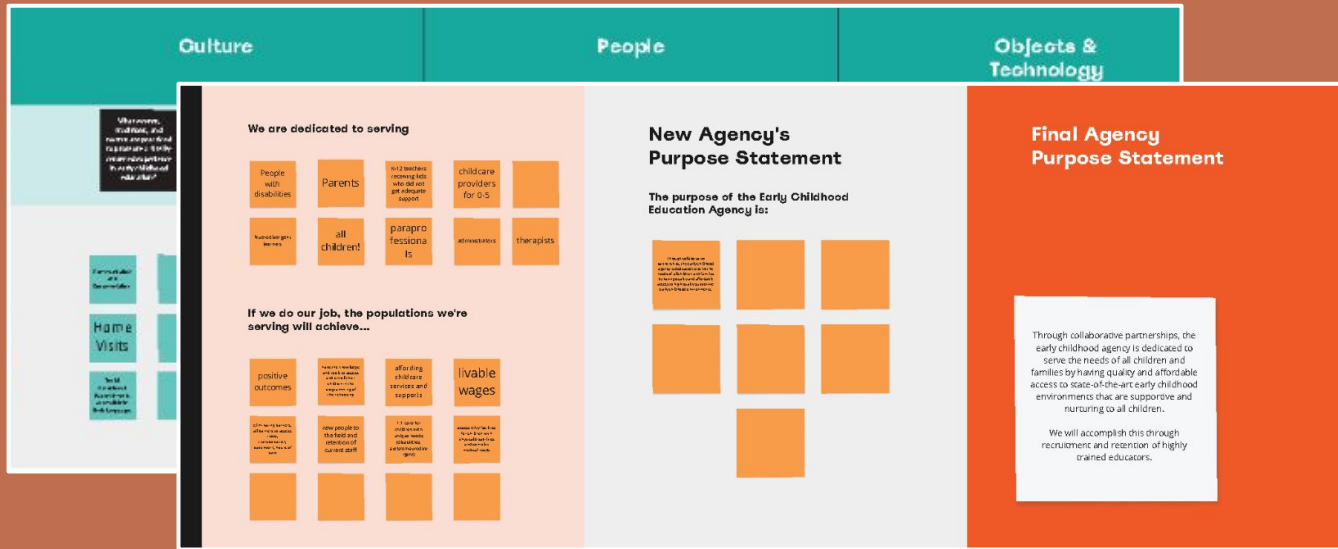
Evaluate

What are the most important factors for early childhood services and supports? (e.g., staff, etc...)

OUR APPROACH IN ACTION

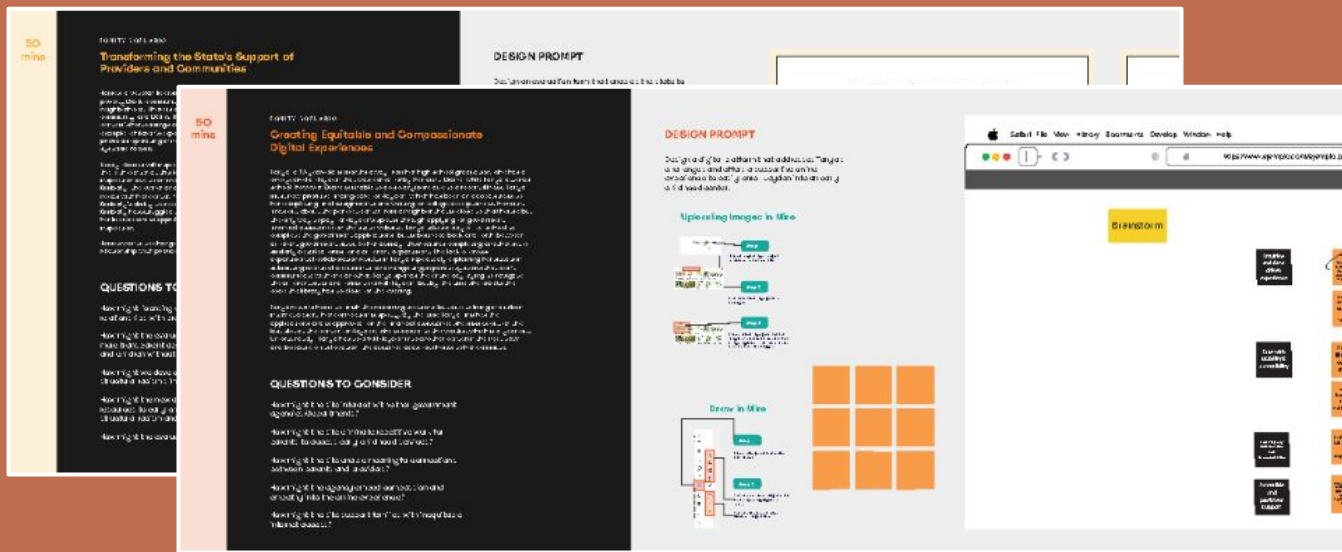
Understanding the System

Convening diverse stakeholders (parents, providers, state personnel, and other stakeholders) to connect their experiences in the early childhood ecosystem and the policies, practices, and infrastructures that influence them.



OUR APPROACH IN ACTION
Future Framing

Collectively imagining futures in which the needs of children, families, and providers are centered.



OUR APPROACH IN ACTION

Prototyping Sessions

Collectively prototyping new policies, practices, and infrastructures that address children, families, and providers' challenges. These prototypes will inform future platforms and experiences for children, parents, and providers within the ecosystem.

FINAL REPORT SHAREOUT

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.



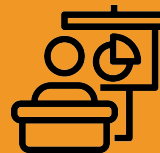
Information
navigation and
accessibility



Cross-collaboration
and communication



Holistic
well-being



Professional
development and
supports



Dynamic learning
environments and
diverse learning
needs

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Co-Designer Driven Desired Outcomes

Informed by the insights provided by the co-designers, four key outcomes were identified as essential to supporting children, families, and providers within the early childhood ecosystem. These outcomes represent the co-designers' collective vision of a future in which children, their families, and the providers that offer services and care are connected and supported.



**Continuity
of care**



**Guaranteed access
to high-quality
early learning**



**Economic
security**



**Harmonious
relationships**

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Continuity of Care



The education and well-being of children are impacted by the care and services provided from prenatal through the transition into kindergarten and beyond. To create equitable outcomes for children and provide them with the support and care they need to thrive, The Department of Early Childhood must provide consistent, coordinated, and comprehensive support to children and families, ensuring their educational, developmental, and health needs are continuously met.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

Guaranteed Access to High-Quality Early Learning



To drive equitable outcomes, the Department of Early Childhood must address systemic inequities directly, prioritizing increased accessibility and transparency within the early education and care ecosystem. Children and families face significant barriers in accessing early childhood education and care services. Beyond the financial burden of childcare costs and the scarcity of available services, families often struggle to navigate the system and understand how best to support their children's development. Creating new roles, such as ecosystem navigators and parent advocates, can provide insight and clarity to families and providers and assist them in remedying challenges they may encounter.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Economic Security



A key initiative in this effort should be forging new pathways to advance early learning careers—supporting families interested in the field and providing opportunities for existing professionals to enhance their skills. Continuous and sustained financial support is essential to achieving economic security. Early childhood practitioners must receive family-sustaining wages and be supported in their educational and professional development through scholarships, stipends, and other resources. Ensuring caregivers earn a family-sustaining wage is essential to their overall well-being and stability, directly impacting the care and opportunities they can provide for their children.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

Harmonious Relationships

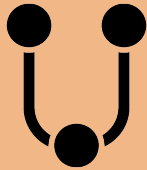


Caregivers should derive meaningful benefits from the time and energy they invest in supporting their child's provider, just as providers benefit from parents' active involvement and resources. Such mutually beneficial relationships should be fostered between all stakeholder groups at every level of the ecosystem. Harmonious relationships support the ecosystem's and its stakeholders' sustainable growth and development. They also foster stronger connections among stakeholders, building a sense of community and belonging, enabling trust-building, and collectively supporting the well-being of children and families across Illinois.

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

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**



DRIVERS

Bridge Digital and Physical Infrastructure Divides



Communities of color often face severe underinvestment in digital resources—like broadband Internet and technology—and physical infrastructure, leading to restricted access to critical services such as transportation, employment, healthcare, and more. This dual deficit hampers economic advancement and exacerbates social inequities. Investing in digital and physical improvements is crucial for creating vibrant, thriving communities where families, providers, and practitioners can fully participate in and benefit from broader societal advancements.



DRIVERS

Advance Communication and Information Exchange

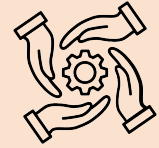


The Department of Early Childhood must take decisive action to enhance the flow of information among all stakeholders. It must also ensure that information is easily accessible in diverse languages, culturally responsive, and available to all Illinois parents, caregivers, and families. By ensuring that parents, providers, and other key stakeholders have relevant, timely, and accurate information and the means to communicate effectively with one another, the Department of Early Childhood can empower them to make well-informed decisions, improving children's education and well-being across Illinois.



DRIVERS

Strengthen Cross-Sector Collaboration



The Department of Early Childhood must work collaboratively with state and local agencies to develop integrated strategies that holistically meet the needs of children and families. Likewise, as the Department integrates services from various agencies, those agencies should maintain continuous collaboration to better support children and their caregivers. By fostering inter-agency cooperation and designing comprehensive social interventions, the Department can significantly expand its impact and drive the transformational change necessary to achieve positive family outcomes.



DRIVERS

Prioritize Holistic Family Well-Being



The Department of Early Childhood must strive for equitable outcomes for families and other stakeholders by addressing the social determinants of health in partnership with other state agencies. Addressing these determinants through policies and programs that ensure access to healthcare, stable housing, adequate nutrition, and social support is crucial for promoting healthy development and creating positive generational impacts for Illinois residents and those who care for them.



DRIVERS

Invest in Workforce Excellence



The Department of Early Childhood must prioritize paying its workforce sustainable and equitable wages, developing pathways to and through the field, and creating structures and policies within the workforce that reinforce the value early childcare professionals provide. By prioritizing these areas, the department can improve the quality and stability of early childhood education, ultimately benefiting children, families, and communities across Illinois.

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Principles

Developed from co-designer discussions, the following principles should be incorporated into interventions and utilized as a metric for creating positive experiences between children, families, and providers within the early childhood ecosystem.



Principles

Establish trust and confidence. Prioritize trust building with Black and Brown communities and other populations impacted by systemic challenges and barriers and develop confidence in their knowledge and firsthand experiences.

Ensure bi-directional communication among stakeholders. Create mechanisms for families, providers, and state personnel to receive and distribute information amongst each other and establish channels for providing feedback to improve services and overall experiences.

Foster informed decision-making. Develop systems that enhance transparency and enable informed decision-making by providing access to real-time data and essential information.

Create seamless individualized experiences. Mobilize data and information to meet the unique needs of families and providers through individualized experiences—using existing insights and collected data to connect stakeholders with the resources and services they need.

Provide 360-degree human support. Humans should enhance the power, clarity, and connection that technology provides in the experience for families, providers, and other stakeholders. Person-to-person interaction is critical to successful delivery and positive outcomes.

Expand the scope of early childhood education and care. Broaden the definition and purview of early childhood to include prenatal development through school age, considering the children's and families' holistic well-being.

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Principles

Shift the perception of early childhood education and care.

Transform how early childhood education and its practitioners are perceived, valued, and prioritized, emphasizing their essential roles in child development and impact on community well-being.

Enhance and expand early childhood educational and professional pathways. Facilitate pathways for caregivers and others to obtain the qualifications and knowledge required to enter the field of early childhood education.

Activate culturally affirming experiences. Design environments, experiences, and interactions that respect the richness of diverse cultures and languages honor cultural practices, and promote a sense of belonging for all stakeholders.

Create needs-based and sensory-rich environments. Design spaces that address children's unique and multifaceted needs, helping them reach and exceed their developmental milestones.

Position early childhood providers as community anchors. Enhance early childhood providers' ability to utilize their spaces to foster more connected communities and support the needs and aspirations of children and families.

Strengthen sustainability and support structures. Ensure unimpeded access to diverse financial and economic resources that sustain high-quality early childhood education and care and its providers.

Principles

Develop pathways to family-sustaining employment. Develop accessible pathways for families to secure family-sustaining employment and create flourishing communities.

Establish safety for BIPOC communities. Develop anti-racist policies, practices, and spaces to ensure the safety of families of color and other marginalized groups.

Champion policies that safeguard and support families. Equip and protect families with policies that guarantee access to early childhood education and care, ensure their involvement in their children's development without fear of penalization, and sustain their confidence in making critical decisions.

Facilitate collective anti-racist action. Initiate and facilitate opportunities for stakeholders to collectively create strategies and initiatives that create racially equitable outcomes, foster inclusion, and cultivate anti-racist communities.

Address social determinants of health. Utilize a public health framework to develop policies, practices, and environments that enhance children's and families' quality of education and life.

Catalyze community partnership and support. Facilitate the creation of community-based partnerships that provide children, caregivers, and providers with the resources and tools they need to flourish.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Equity Framework

To address the racial inequities and hardships experienced by Illinoian families, the Department of Early Childhood must implement strategic efforts that ensure all children, families, and providers receive the necessary resources and supports to access and deliver high-quality care and services. The Early Childhood Education and Care Equity Framework identifies the pathway to create an ecosystem that serves all Illinoisans and captures the interconnectivity of the proposed and co-created outcomes, drivers, and principles. Desired outcomes represent the goals set by co-designers for the Department of Early Childhood, while the drivers refer to the essential approaches employed to reach these goals. To bring the drivers—and ultimately the desired outcomes—to fruition, the principles serve as guideposts for developing new programs and services, modifying existing ones, and acting as evaluation metrics for both.

- 4** Desired Outcomes
- 5** Drivers
- 18** Principles



CO-DESIGNER-DRIVEN RECOMMENDATIONS

Transforming Early Childhood Education and Care in Illinois

Co-designers created interventions to remedy challenges inhibiting children, families, and providers from smoothly accessing, navigating, and receiving support and care from the early childhood ecosystem. They determined which of the previously identified challenges they preferred to build interventions for. Based on the challenge being solved, they then identified outcomes that the interventions must deliver. Throughout the co-design process, they focused on centering racial equity when creating their concepts and incorporated equity-focused interventions that address racial disparities that impact Illinoisan families. Lastly, they collectively built solutions that addressed the selected challenges and enabled positive experiences for children, families, and providers.



TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Creating Equitable and Compassionate Digital Experiences

Due to limited slots, lengthy applications and processes, and one-directional communication, families and providers feel their relationship with the state is transactional and extractive. The state requests information, yet there aren't effective mechanisms for families and providers to receive information and share concerns. This new digital platform seeks to create new mechanisms that simplify processes, reduce repetitive steps, lessen the time to process information, and support families more efficiently. Furthermore, reimagining how families, providers, state personnel, and other critical stakeholders communicate will result in more effective use of technology.

Key elements of this prototype include:

Intuitive and data-driven experience.

The platform can identify critical needs and automatically pair families with available services based on the information provided. For non-English speakers, the platform will automatically translate and create a culturally affirming experience.

Cross-agency collaboration and data sharing.

Families can access their data in a centralized location, flag discrepancies and incorrect details, and more. The platform will also implement mechanisms for information security—protecting sensitive data from being accessed or weaponized against families.

CREATING EQUITABLE AND COMPASSIONATE DIGITAL EXPERIENCES

RACIAL EQUITY FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS

Automated translation technology that enables greater accessibility for non-English speakers

Culturally responsive website designed to be inclusive, respectful, and considerate of diverse cultural backgrounds and needs

CONNECTED BARRIERS

Language barriers between providers and parents hinder information sharing, preventing parents from making informed decisions about their children's learning and development.

Although parents and caregivers are responsible for decisions affecting their children's growth and well-being, they often need more tools and insight to identify the best programs and services for their children, limiting their ability to make informed decisions.

Inadequate digital infrastructure at the system and provider levels perpetuates information gaps, deepens the digital divide, and increases uncertainty around where and how to access resources.

CO-DESIGNER-CREATED CONCEPT

Creating Equitable and Compassionate Digital Experiences

1

Application Completion



3

Application Review by State Team

WELCOME BACK TANYA!

Sign into your Digital Portal

txxxxxxx@gmail.com

.....

REMEMBER ME [FORGOT PASSWORD?](#)

SIGN IN

Don't have an account? [Create one.](#)

6

Family Enrolls Children in Services



CO-DESIGNER CREATED CONCEPT

Creating Equitable and Compassionate Digital Experiences

INFRASTRUCTURE ANATOMY

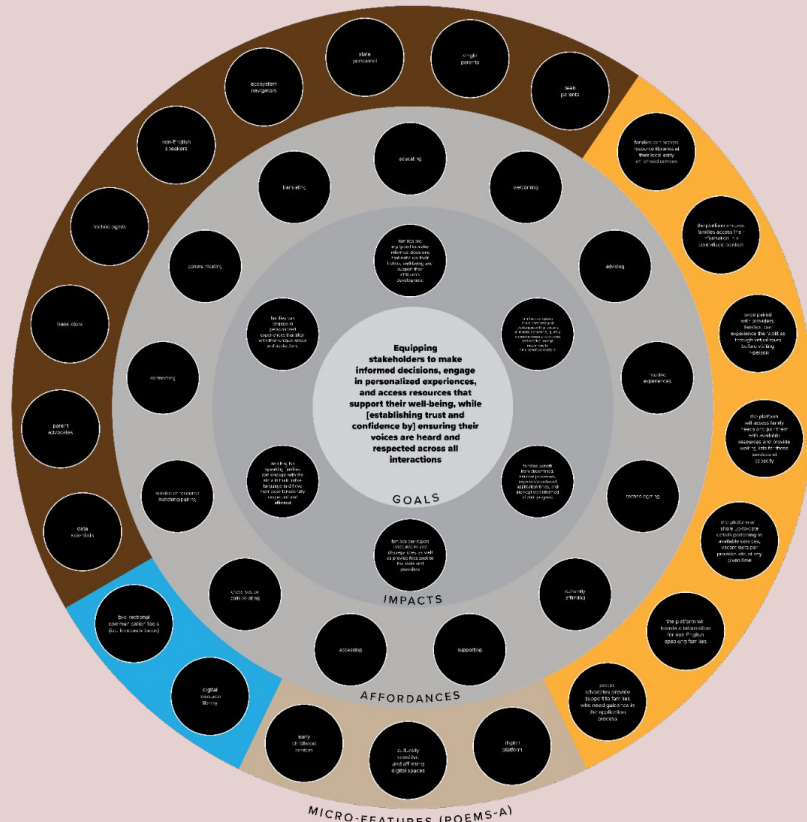
GOALS. The primary goals the co-designers sought to address through prototyping and conceiving.

IMPACT. The impacts that can be created given the primary goal. They were driven by co-designers' vision of the future and informed by the affordances and identified features.

AFFORDANCES. The actionable properties that need to be created/afforded to reach the identified impacts and goals. Affordances are specific capabilities that a user is enabled to do.

FEATURES. The elements identified drive the enablement of the identified affordances to achieve the identified impacts.

The four levels of the anatomy (features, affordances, impacts, goals) help us to analyze the co-designer-created prototypes. These also help us to visualize how various elements can be integrated into new system interventions.



MICRO-FEATURES (POEMS-A) LEGEND

- People
- Objects
- Environments
- Messages
- Services
- Activities

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Early Childhood Center Evaluation Reimagined

Co-designers designed an evaluation form, process, and associated resources that strengthen providers' efforts to support children, families, and the communities in which they operate. The co-designed evaluation process included the addition of components that bring clarity to the evaluation process, ensuring providers are aware of the expectations and guidelines on which they'll be assessed. One such component was a letter notifying providers of upcoming evaluations' timing and purpose. It also serves as a relationship-building tool that introduces providers to the licensing agents they'll work with. Co-designers also recommended that the process include mechanisms for bi-directional communication, enabling providers to communicate the needs of the communities they serve and their own goals, needs, and experiences.

Key elements of this prototype include:

Addressing racial inequities in communities.

Early childhood center communities of practice would co-develop strategies to address structural racism. These communities of practice would include providers, state employees, and community-based organizations.

Developing provider support structures.

Shifting the dynamics of the relationship between the state and providers was central to this concept. A new role, compliance coordinator, would be created to assist providers with understanding regulations and meeting the state's expectations.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER EVALUATION REIMAGINED

RACIAL EQUITY FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS

Early childhood center communities of practice that co-develop strategies to address structural racism

Training that supports evaluators in understanding challenges and racial inequities in the communities they serve

CONNECTED BARRIERS

Siloed state departments and providers constrain cross-system communication, widening families' information gaps and reinforcing repetitive administrative processes for parents and providers.

Varying regulations and processes for local, state, and federal funding pose persistent barriers for providers. Inconsistent cycle timelines, eligibility criteria, and requirements create overwhelming stress and undermine quality early childhood care and support sustainability.

Limited collaboration amongst agencies responsible for transportation, healthcare, and housing creates obstacles for families, exhausting their resources and energy. Thus, parents' ability to access early childhood education and support equitably and promptly is restricted.

CO-DESIGNER-CREATED CONCEPT

Creating Equitable and Compassionate Digital Experiences



CO-DESIGNER CREATED CONCEPT

Creating Equitable and Compassionate Digital Experiences

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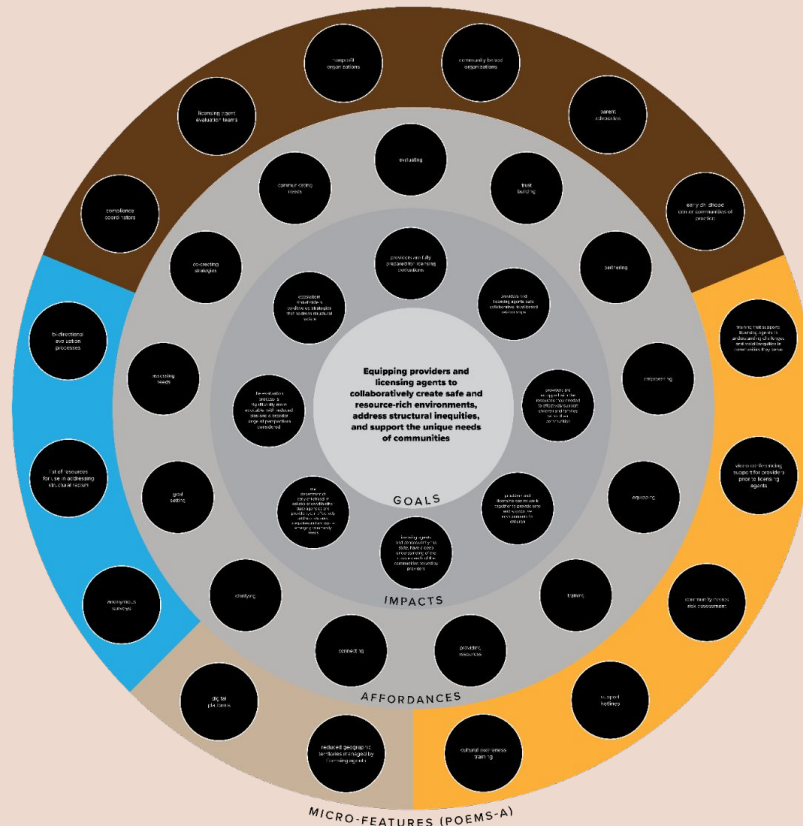
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TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN ILLINOIS

Anti-Racist Early Childhood Center

Co-designers addressed family economic security, early childhood education and care career pathways, and accessibility. They considered how spatial design, messaging, and resources could initiate anti-racist action within the community and create bridges to economic security for families.

While children are traditionally viewed as the primary beneficiaries of early childhood education and care services, the co-designers reimaged these organizations and spaces as integral community anchors. They expanded the understanding that early childhood providers and settings can effectively serve the diverse needs of children, parents, and families. This co-designed prototype demonstrates that through clear, explicit, anti-racist messaging, early childhood providers can become institutions that can extend their reach into communities and create anti-racist commitment and action.

Key elements of this prototype include:

Clear, explicit anti-racist messaging and community engagement. Early childhood providers communicate their explicit commitment to maintaining safety for families from marginalized communities. Providers utilize their learning spaces to catalyze anti-racist action and develop anti-racist learners through actions within the space and the broader community.

Integrating a global framework. Early learning environments should uplift diverse cultures and languages through art, technology, and objects. They should strive to be inclusive and accessible learning environments supporting young people to become multilingual through signage, literature, and curriculum.

ANTI-RACIST EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

RACIAL EQUITY FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS

Interior and exterior expressions of anti-racism

Anti-racist assemblies that promote anti-racism across the community

Quarterly anti-racist and cultural sensitivity training open to the entire community

CONNECTED BARRIERS

Although parents and caregivers are responsible for decisions affecting their children's growth and well-being, they often need more tools and insight to identify the best programs for their families, limiting their ability to make informed decisions.

External factors like socioeconomic status, family education levels, and economic stability shape children's growth and development. However, parents and caregivers often lack the necessary support to effectively address these factors and foster their children's development.

Workforce shortages, an underpaid and undervalued workforce, limited funding, and lack of professional growth opportunities limit the recruitment and retention of educators, negatively impacting the quality and continuity of children's education.

CO-DESIGNER-CREATED CONCEPT

Anti-Racist Early Childhood Center

BIENVENUE स्वागत 44
いらっしやいませ WELCOME
BIENVENIDA
欢迎



CO-DESIGNER CREATED CONCEPT

Anti-Racist Early Childhood Center

INFRASTRUCTURE ANATOMY

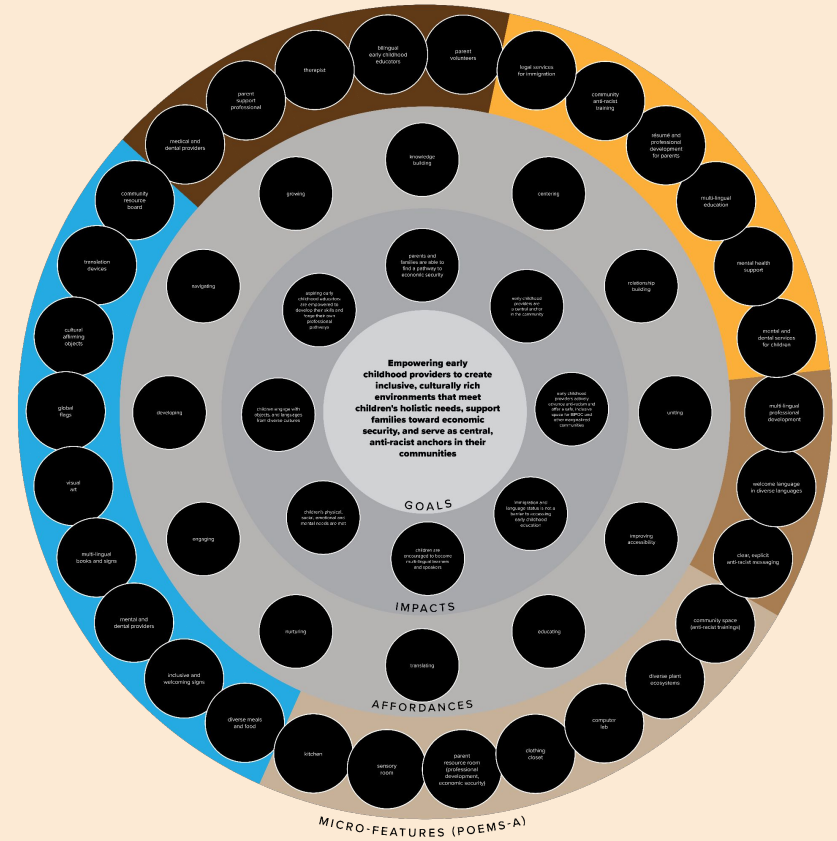
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MICRO-FEATURES (POEMS-A) LEGEND

- People
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- Messages
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- Activities

THE WORK AHEAD

Conclusion

Creating an early childhood ecosystem that meets the needs of children, families, and providers requires multi-level interventions, practices, and policies prioritizing access to and delivery of early learning and care. Strategic cross-sector collaboration with other state departments (housing, transportation, human services) enables children, families, and providers to have the social, financial, emotional, and mental resources needed to achieve equitable outcomes for all families. The Department of Early Childhood and its partners should ensure alignment with the outlined outcomes, drivers, and principles as they highlight the integral components needed to build an equitable early childhood ecosystem. The outcomes, drivers, and principles will guide the Department of Early Childhood in holistically supporting families, building thriving and resilient communities, and creating trusting connections among all early childhood stakeholders.





Small Group Discussions

FINAL REPORT SHAREOUT

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