

# Early Childhood Education and Care Transition Advisory Committee

November 12, 2024

5:30-7:00pm



Welcome!

## Here are our virtual meeting protocols for TAC Members



- **Please be on video** as much as possible to help with overall engagement
- **Mute self** when not speaking
- Use **Chat feature** or **“raise hand” button** for questions or comments
- Technical issues can happen to anyone – **chat privately to Liz Garza for any needs**
- If you are experiencing an unstable connection - **switch to phone call or close other applications**

# Notes regarding this Meeting

- **TAC Meetings are open to the public**
  - Meeting materials and a summary of minutes will be posted on the IDEC Transition website
    - <https://idec.illinois.gov/>
- **Members of public are in “listen only” mode**
  - Anyone may provide input/feedback on the TAC meeting via the input/feedback form; a link will be shared in chat
  - Anyone may provide input/feedback on the TAC's discussion via a public stakeholder Padlet; a link will be shared in the chat
  - Additional public input will be gathered in Listening Sessions, held every other month, the open feedback form, and in multiple other forums throughout the Transition process
    - English: <https://forms.gle/4b9egPz6nXJ4XR427>
    - Spanish: <https://forms.gle/TCQu7sqr4MQpaxEu9>
- **This meeting has Spanish translation**
  - Please speak slowly and avoid using acronyms to help us ensure accessible translation

# Today's Goals

- ✓ Build community amongst TAC members
- ✓ Provide updates on the Department of Early Childhood and transition activities
- ✓ Make meaning of findings from ChiByDesign's co-design workshops
- ✓ Review preliminary regional listening session findings

# Agenda

Welcome and Introductions	15 min
Department of Early Childhood Updates	10 min
ChiByDesign <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final report presentation (30 min)</li><li>• Small Group Discussion (15 min)</li></ul>	45 min
Community engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preliminary Regional Listening Session Findings (15 min)</li><li>• Discussion (5 min)</li></ul>	15 min
Looking Ahead and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• December in-person meeting logistics</li><li>• Equity reflection survey</li></ul>	5 min

# Welcome & Introductions



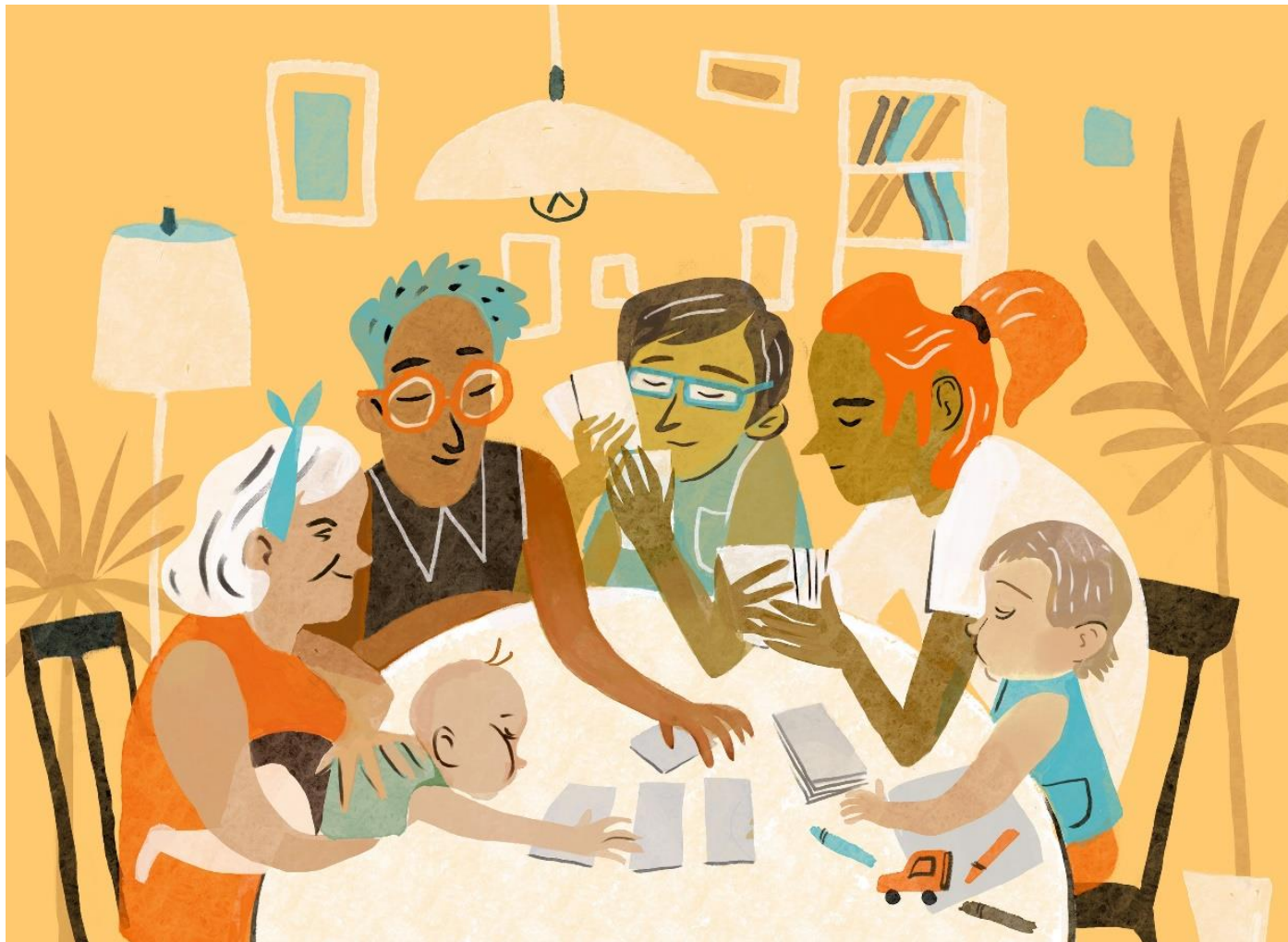
# TAC Chat Introductions

What are you most looking forward to during the December in-person meeting?

Feel free to use emojis or images in the chat!



# Family Spotlight



One challenge has been inconsistent availability of programs, which can **disrupt continuity for my child**. I've also noticed that some resources are difficult to access or understand. With the creation of the new agency, I'd like to see **better coordination and clearer information**, so families can easily find and utilize the services they need.

*- Parent in Cook County (Regional Listening Session Participant)*



# TAC Charge

The state has established the **Transition Advisory Committee (TAC)**, comprised of representatives with diverse perspectives from across the state, to serve as an external advisory committee as the state moves toward a single ECE agency.

The TAC will **seek and help the state make meaning of stakeholder input** in preparation for the transition, with a **particular emphasis on understanding families' goals and needs** from a comprehensive ECE system for Illinois children.

The Transition Advisory Committee will work with the State's Early Childhood Transition Director, Ann Whalen, to **release a report by December 31, 2025.**



# Community Agreements

## Make space for vulnerability

- Continually check we are centering families and equity
- Lean into discomfort
- Engage in self-reflection to understand our own reactions first

## Engage in respectful dialogue

- Assume best intent and attend to impact
- Ask clarifying questions
- Step up, step back
- One mic
- Be curious and seek to clarify differences

## Actively participate

- Show up prepared
- Be fully present
- Be open-minded and respectful
- Think outside the box

**Extend technology grace!**

# TAC Equity Framework

**An equitable system is one that meets the needs of all children and families, resulting in individual outcomes that cannot be predicted or determined by race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, religion, orientation, geography, ability, immigration status, housing status, socioeconomic status, or any other protected class or circumstance.**

Achieving an equitable system requires a mindset shift that honors and embraces each family's unique racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, gender, religious, orientation, geographic, ability and socioeconomic identities, and the intersections between and amongst them. This new way of thinking about how programs, policies and systems can serve children and families simultaneously, views individual and community outcomes in the context of historical exclusion, identifies policies, practices and decisions that create and exacerbate inequities, and dismantles structures that maintain injustices.

Achieving this vision for equity within the context of the transition to the new IL Department of Early Childhood requires all of us to make decisions that prioritize those most impacted by structural racism and systemic inequities. This calls for a strategic approach that aligns and coordinates holistic services and maximizes parental choice to meet the needs of children and the adults in their lives. The process used to achieve this vision should use a variety of mechanisms that are inclusive of local voice and community partners and determined by those most impacted by structural racism and systemic inequities. Analyzing and reporting of disaggregated outcomes is critical to provide transparency about the impact and inform future changes that bring us closer to our vision of equitable family outcomes.



A new way of thinking for designing programs, policies, and systems that

- serve children and the adults in their lives simultaneously,
- view individual and community outcomes in the context of historical exclusion,
- identify policies, practices, and decisions that create and exacerbate inequities, and
- dismantle structures that maintain injustices.

## STRATEGY

Aligning and/or coordinating services with other organizations to meet the needs of all family members using a variety of tools or mechanisms that

- are determined by those most impacted by structural racism and systemic inequities, and
- meets the needs of children and the adults in their lives.

## SYSTEM OUTCOMES

Providing services and supports to both children and adults simultaneously and tracking outcomes for both that cannot be predicted or determined by race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, religion, orientation, geography, ability, immigration status, housing status, socioeconomic status, or any other protected class or circumstance.

# Department of Early Childhood Update



**Illinois Department of Early Childhood**

- New IDEC Team Member: Sydney Ellison, Chief Operations Officer
- Workgroups re-launch and launch this month!
  - Supporting Multilingual Learners
  - Supporting Families with Children with Special Needs
  - Data, Analytics, and Insights
  - Funding Design



# ChiByDesign: Small group discussion

1. How do these findings align or differ from your current understanding of community priorities for an equitable, family-centered system?
2. What are the opportunities to incorporate workshop principles to guide our process moving forward?
3. Based on workshop findings, what are adjustments we should make to our current process?
4. How can we incorporate these findings into our ongoing work to comprehensively understand families' needs for an equitable early childhood system?



# Small groups in session. Meeting will resume momentarily.



Press Release - Gov. Pritzker Signs SB1

ILGA Public Act 103-0594

## Non-TAC public participants may also use this time to:

Explore the Early Childhood Transition website

▪ <https://idec.illinois.gov/>

Provide feedback via survey

▪ English: <https://forms.gle/4b9egPz6nXJ4XR427>

▪ Spanish: <https://forms.gle/TCQu7sqr4MQpaxEu9>

Non-TAC public participants are encouraged to use this time to respond to discussion questions via Padlet:

- **Advocates:** <https://padlet.com/ssmillie2/tac-meeting-12-chibydesign-advocates-uzttzg7203vssgsi>
- **Families (English & Spanish):** <https://padlet.com/ssmillie2/tac-meeting-12-chibydesign-findings-families-124kuiekczjo418d>
- **Providers (English & Spanish):** <https://padlet.com/ssmillie2/tac-meeting-12-chibydesign-providers-xqc7ladsom3s9by3>
- **Service organizations:** <https://padlet.com/ssmillie2/tac-meeting-12-chibydesign-service-organizations-8q256mnvaiwa2hib>
- **State and local agencies:** <https://padlet.com/ssmillie2/tac-meeting-12-chibydesign-state-and-local-agencies-njgz3i7mizd0thfi>
- **Spanish (all other roles):** <https://padlet.com/ssmillie2/reuni-n-12-del-tac-chibydesign-todos-los-dem-s-roles-x6ah6sdq8w7j74nr>

# Community Feedback







NOVEMBER 2024

# Regional Listening Session

Engagement data and preliminary themes





## Regional Listening Sessions Reported Participation

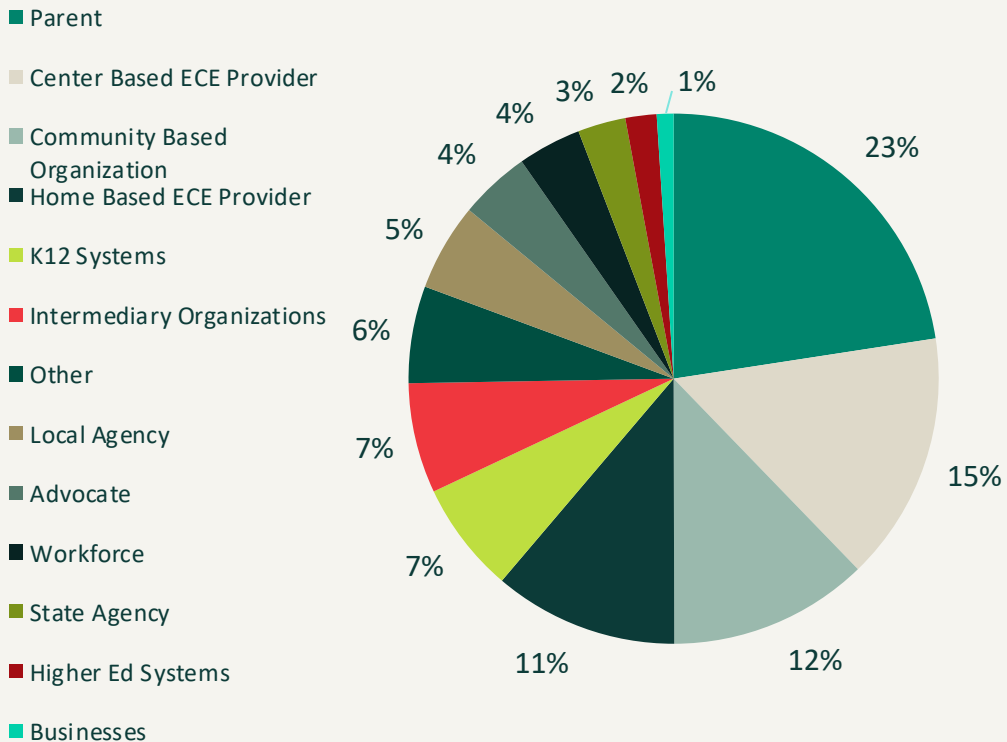
**72** individual meetings

**40** organizations hosted meetings

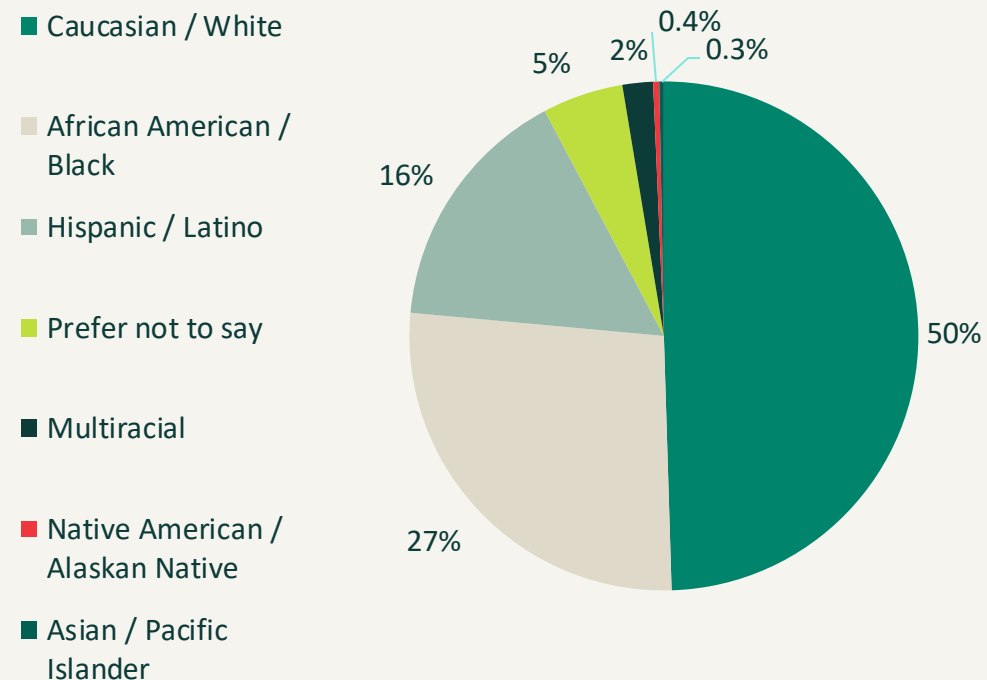
**1,689** participants

# Parents were the largest group we heard from, and overall listening session participants were racially diverse

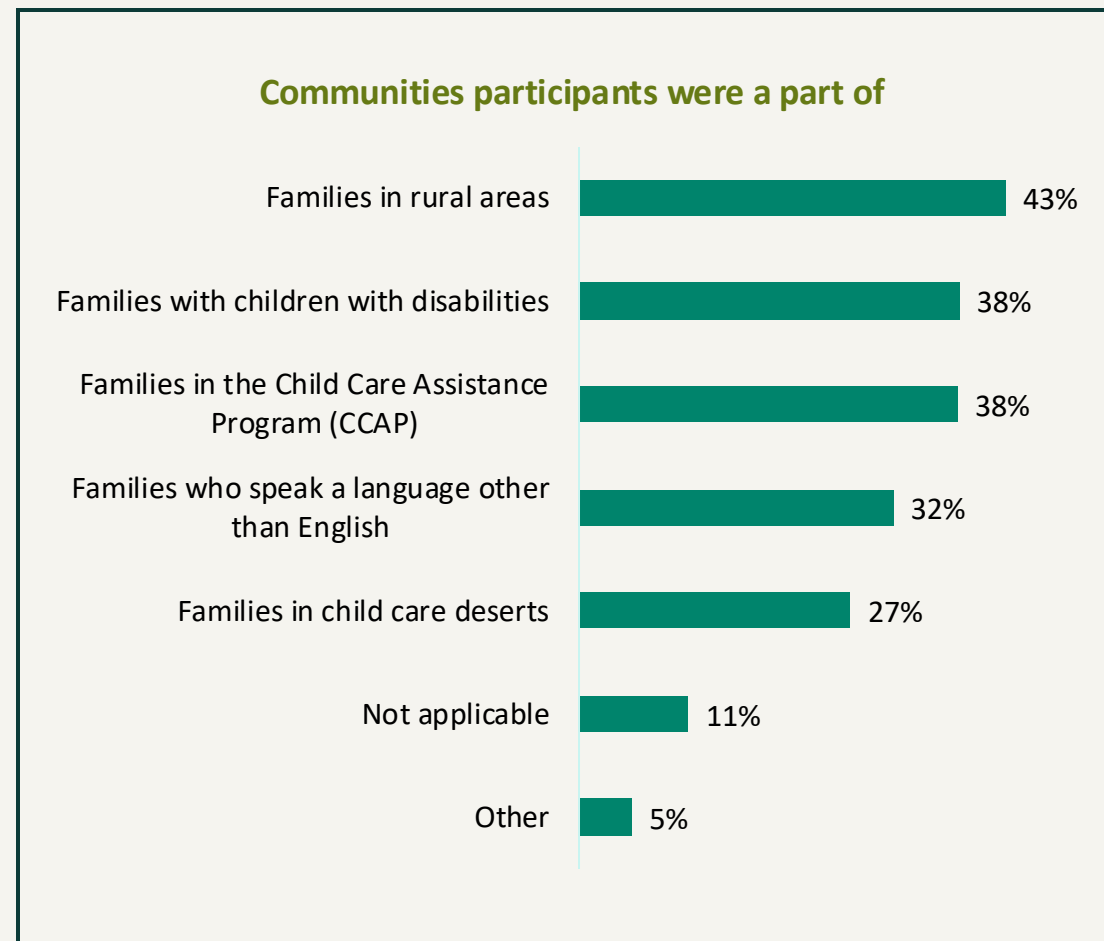
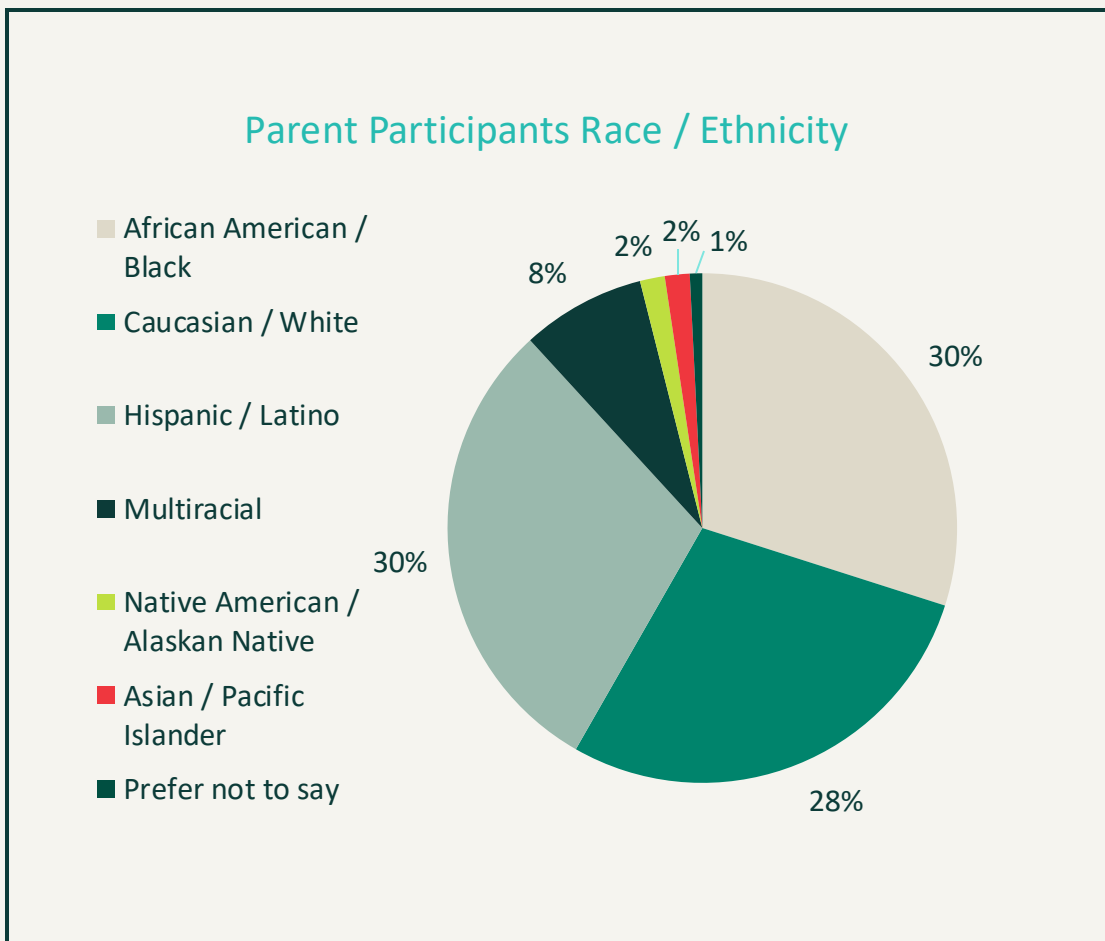
Participants Role in the ECE System



Participants Race / Ethnicity



# Parent participants were racially diverse and represented the lived experiences of many of our priority populations...



# Regional Listening Sessions sought to learn from communities related to four questions

1

In your experience accessing or providing early childhood services, **what has worked well?** What have you valued about your experience and would like to remain the same?

2

In your experience accessing or providing early childhood services, **what has not worked well?** What would you like to see improved with the creation of the new agency?

3

**What more could the transition team do to focus on equity** (including racial equity) and plan for a family-centered system?

4

**What else is on your mind** with the transition to a new agency?



## Three family-focused themes emerged from the data

### 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*



“I've found that navigating the system can be confusing, with unclear communication about resources and eligibility. I'd like to see the new agency simplify the process and provide clearer guidance for families. Improved staff training on diverse needs would also be beneficial to ensure everyone gets the support they deserve.”

PARENT IN DUPAGE COUNTY

## Families appreciate the mixed delivery system and experience barriers accessing services

Families in rural areas, multilingual families, and families with children who have special needs described difficulties with accessing services. Specific challenges include:

- **Finding information.** Families described challenges with navigating early childhood education and care services specifically related to finding information about services they may be eligible for, lengthy applications, repetitive information asked across multiple applications.
- **Services not available in their community and long waitlists.** Services may not be available or open during times of day that work for the family. Families frequently mentioned wait lists for child care programs or long wait times to receive EI services.
- **Lack of full day care.** Part day preschool is a challenge if after-care or wrap around care is not available at the same site.
- **Lack of transportation.** Parents named transition issues and long drives to attend EI appointments as barriers.

“Access to EI services can be extremely limited in rural areas. I ended up **driving about 200 miles per week for my two kids' therapy appointments** over the last four years. The EI system needs to better compensate its providers (including paying them for missed appointments) and incentivize them to serve rural communities by paying them for travel to more remote areas.”  
– Parent participant (County unknown)





## Families value continuity of services and want providers to work together

Parents and caregivers expect providers to work with one another to support their child and emphasized the value of parent or family support services or parent groups as important resources to support their children's healthy development. Specifically, parents appreciate:

- Smooth transitions between programs or collaboration with multiple providers to ensure continuity of services and prevent interruptions to their child's developmental progress.
- Parent support groups that help families learn about and connect to resources to support their children's development.

"Early Childhood/Home Visit programs are always great for a new parent. **You learn new things to teach and provide for your child and they are always helping you get in touch to the program you may need for your child**, whether its Early Intervention Services to a doctor's office who accepts your health insurance."

– Parent in Lake County



## Families emphasized the importance of positive relationships with providers and would like services available in their home language

When families shared about positive experiences, they often mentioned supportive and culturally responsive staff and robust communication. Specifically, parents value:

- Caring and responsive teachers in ECE settings
- Home visiting services and the resources their home visitor shares with them
- Consistency with providers/caregivers that enables trusting relationships to form
- Robust and consistent communication
- Services delivered in their preferred language

**“I've appreciated the supportive staff who truly care about my child's development and the strong communication among educators and families.** The flexibility in scheduling has also been a huge help. I value these aspects and hope they remain the same as they make a real difference in our experience.”  
– Parent in DuPage County



## Next Steps



Analyze data collected through the end of October



Develop a Regional Listening Session final report



Share findings with session hosts and community members



# TAC Feedback Survey and Equity Reflection Reminder

Please take a moment to fill out the TAC feedback survey, including the equity reflection questions.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdG8kADUM9TG9XRdJaaCMiLHdHiCj7sQ\\_5PYT4tKsq6yBwp0A/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdG8kADUM9TG9XRdJaaCMiLHdHiCj7sQ_5PYT4tKsq6yBwp0A/viewform)



# December In-Person Meeting

## Meeting Objectives:

1. Continue building community to strengthen relationships among TAC members.
2. Celebrate and reflect on TAC's contributions over the past year.
3. Make meaning of findings from the transition's Year 1 engagement activities
4. Identify priorities for further learning and understanding in TAC's Year 2 work.



# Next Steps & Close



**Thank you!**

- Please complete the TAC Feedback Survey and respond to the equity reflection prompts.
- Follow up email to be sent next week with meeting summary.
- ChiByDesign Report will be posted on IDEC website.
- Regional Listening Session Summary Report will be shared and posted in the next 3-4 weeks.
- TAC members should reach out to Ann Whalen or Bela Moté with any feedback
- Listening Session:
  - **Friday, November 15, 2024 12 – 1 pm**
- Next Meeting:
  - **Thursday, December 5. Please hold 10-3, location Bloomington/Normal area- specifics to come.**

# Think, Pair, Share

- Question placeholder



# Share!

Share 1 takeaway from your conversation in the chat or verbally.







“I think the transition team should prioritize building trust with families, especially those who may have had negative experiences with previous agencies.”

LAKE COUNTY PARENT

Communities across the state have varying needs, challenges, and successes that are influenced by regional and local collaborations and resource structures.

- There is a **wide range of experiences in accessing** high-quality child care, home visiting, Early Intervention, and preschool services across the state. For those families who experienced success accessing services that met their needs and quality expectations, they noted one thing in common – **strong local and regional coordination** amongst various programs and community-based organizations, including **ensuring that information is streamlined and accessible**.
- There are bright spots and exemplary work happening in several parts of the state where **local and regional collaborations, dedicated educators and care providers ensure families can access high-quality care and other resources** that they need.
- **Strong relationships help facilitate successful outcomes for children and families**. Relationships between providers and families, between local resource & referral agencies and programs, between different providers (i.e. child care providers, schools, Head Start), along with transparent information and resources from the state ultimately help families to be successful.
- **Lack of adequate funding undergirds all other major issues** in the ECE system and stakeholders identified ways that current funding structures create silos and limit collaboration.



## 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



## Participants recommended strengthening and compensating the ECE workforce

Participants suggested opportunities that include:

- Recruiting a diverse workforce
- Providing training on culturally responsive PD 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*



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

Participants suggested opportunities that include:

- Creating a family advisory board
- 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
- 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*





“I've found that navigating the system can be confusing, with unclear communication about resources and eligibility. I'd like to see the new agency simplify the process and provide clearer guidance for families. Improved staff training on diverse needs would also be beneficial to ensure everyone gets the support they deserve.”

PARENT IN DUPAGE COUNTY

While families’ specific barriers to access vary, across the board they value consistent and culturally responsive relationships, coordination and communication.

**ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY**

Families appreciate the mixed delivery system and experience barriers accessing services. Families in rural areas, multilingual families, and families with children who have special needs described difficulties with accessing services. Specific challenges include:

- Finding information
- Services not available in their community and long waitlists
- Lack of full day care
- Lack of transportation

**COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

Families value continuity of services and want providers to work together. Parents and caregivers expect providers to work with one another to support their child and emphasized the value of parent or family support services or parent groups as important resources to support their children’s healthy development.

Specifically, parents appreciate:

- Smooth transitions between programs and services
- Parent support groups

**RELATIONSHIPS**

Families emphasized the importance of positive relationships with providers and would like services available in their home language. When families shared about positive experiences, they often mentioned:

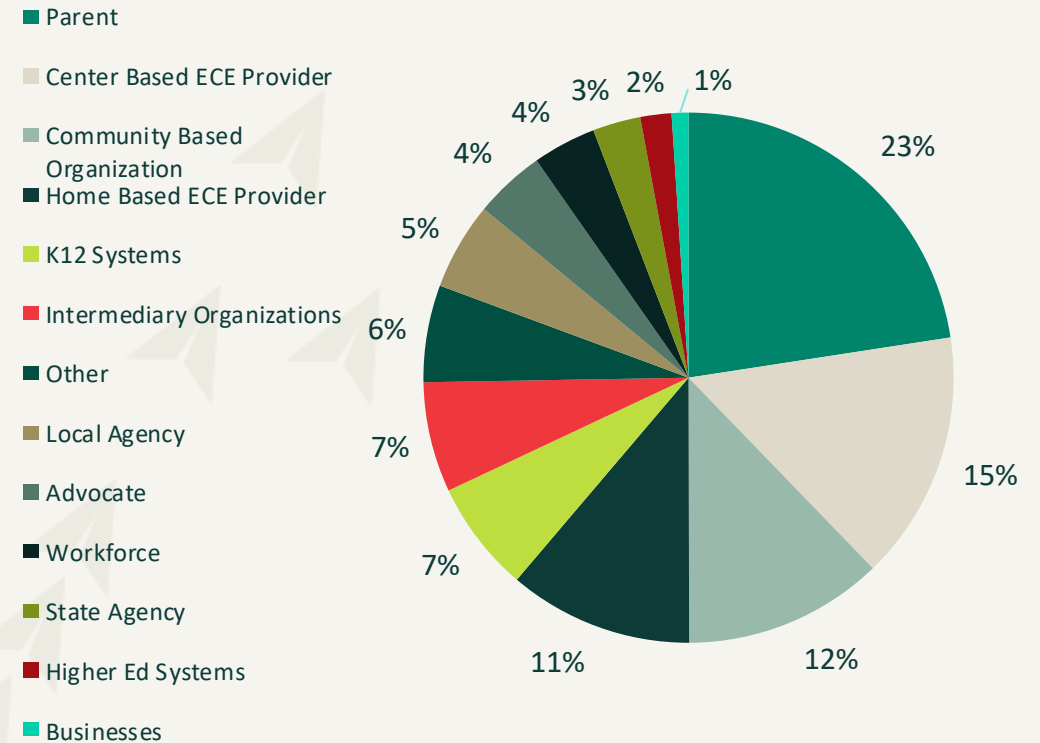
- Caring and responsive teachers Home visiting services
- Consistency with providers/caregivers and trusting
- Robust and consistent communication
- Services delivered in their preferred language



# Parent participants were racially diverse and represented the lived experiences of many of our priority populations.

- Parents were the single largest group we heard from.
  - 23% parents
- Participants were racially diverse, especially parent participants.
  - Overall: 45% BIPOC
  - Parents: 62% BIPOC
- 98% of participants in regional listening sessions were a part of or serve priority populations.
- Residents in every county of the state had the opportunity to participate in Regional Listening Sessions.
  - 100% of counties have been represented

Participants Role in the ECE System



Data based on meetings through Sept 30<sup>th</sup>





# Residents in every county of the state had the opportunity to participate in Regional Listening Sessions

