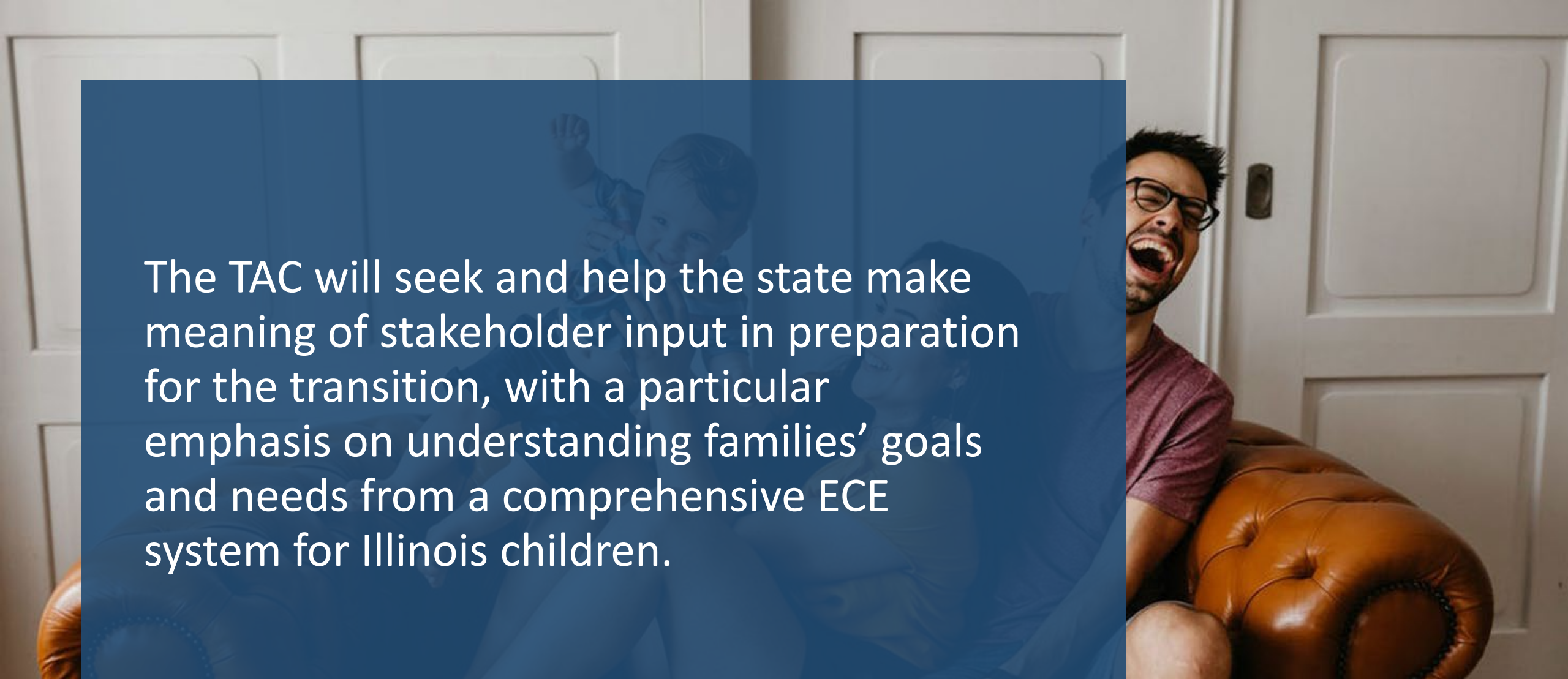




Transition Advisory Committee

December 9, 2025
Normal Public Library
10:00 AM-3:00 PM





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.

TAC's Charge



Today's Goals



- **Continue building community** to strengthen relationships among TAC members.
- **Celebrate and reflect** on TAC's contributions over the past year
- **Identify TAC's strategic priorities** and revised processes for 2026
- **Learn about and provide feedback on** Transition Workstreams: Advisory, Program Standards & Alignment, and Licensing.

Our Agenda



Welcome	10:00 – 10:15AM
Community Builder	10:15 – 10:35AM
IDEC Updates	10:35 – 10:50AM
TAC In Review	10:50 – 11:20AM
Workstream Deep-Dive: <i>Advisory Workgroup</i>	11:20AM – 12:00PM
Lunch	12:00 – 12:45PM
Community Builder	12:45 – 1:05PM
Workstream Deep-Dive: <i>Program Standards Alignment</i>	1:05 – 1:35PM
Workstream Deep Dive: <i>Licensing</i>	1:35 – 2:05PM
Break	2:05 – 2:15PM
TAC Year 3 – Looking Ahead	2:15 – 2:55PM
Closing	2:55 – 3:00PM

Public Participation

- **TAC Meetings are open to the public**
 - Meeting materials and a summary of minutes will be posted on the IDEC Transition website at <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>
- **Today's agenda is designed for in-person engagement, interactions, and discussion**
 - During small group discussions, table time, gallery walks, etc., participants on zoom will be able to provide feedback via padlet or surveys only.

What to Know for Today's Session



- Breaks are included throughout the day. Take care of yourself as needed!
- "Bicycle Rack" to capture important items that aren't relevant to the current discussion but need to be addressed through future conversation.
- Lunch is provided for TAC members.



Welcome & Community Builder

TAC 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

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



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.

- 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.

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.

Family spotlight

“We should have more steady positions for parent leadership, not just a stipend to cover the cost of participating... I want parents to have a parent advocate or liaison for every program and site. Parents don’t always know what are the parent policies. If we could teach parents more about how to propose their ideas at the macro and micro levels, to their teachers and site directors, hopefully it will lead other parents to where it led me. Like what it did for me to finish my education and pursue a career where I get to serve.”

- Parent/Caregiver, Cook County



Community Builder



Find Someone & Discuss . .

- Round 1: A mentor who made a positive impact.
- Round 2: A positive change lately that gives you hope.
- Round 3: A strength you carry from your family or community.

Small groups in session. Meeting will resume momentarily.

Non-TAC public participants may:

- Explore the Department of Early Childhood website
 - <https://idec.illinois.gov/>
- Provide feedback via survey
 - English: <https://forms.gle/4b9egPz6nXJ4XR427>
 - Spanish: <https://forms.gle/TCQu7sqr4MQpaxEu9>





IDEC Updates



Welcome New IDEC Staff!

- Dr. Teresa Ramos, Secretary
- Chelsey Ament, Private Secretary
- Thomas Bazan, Chief Fiscal Officer
- Aaron Beswick, Director of Special Projects
- Shontee Blankenship, Chief Quality and Safety Officer
- Joslyne Carson, Private Secretary
- Christi Chadwick, Project Director – Workforce
- Jennifer Cohen-Deihl, General Counsel
- Mackenzie Eisen, Project Director
- Sydney Ellison, Chief Operating Officer
- Julie Gilling, Director of Policy
- Paige Greenwood, Director of Family Engagement
- Arelene Herron, Human Resources Director
- Kelsie Kliner, Project Director
- Christina Krasov, Chief Data Officer
- Matthew Lehman, Agency Procurement Officer
- Jessica Morris, Chief Information Officer (DoIT)
- Maya Portillo, Project Director – Funding Design
- Gerson Ramirez, Director of Legislative Affairs
- Patricia Rooney, Chief Family and Community Systems Officer
- KC Stralka, Chief of Staff
- Shannon Tesio, Director of Fiscal Services
- Marilyn Vazquez, Director of Communication
- Erin Von Holten, Budget Director
- Ann Whalen, Chief Transition Design Officer
- Brandon Woudenberg, Deputy General Counsel

2025: PDG B-5 Systems Building Grant

PDG Program Priorities align well to Illinois' current work. Illinois Application included initiative underway with the intent to go faster and further in 2026.

Project Strategies:

Strategy 1: IDEC is unifying oversight of key programs

Strategy 2: IL will redesign its approach to EC Funding

Strategy 3: IL will align operations across EC programs to improve administrative efficiency

Strategy 4: IL will use tech to provide a seamless experience for families, and to streamline verification of workforce credentials (IDEC 360)

- User Portals
- Data and Analytics Hub



Funding: \$222,000,000 Total

- Federal (ACF), competitive, available to 45 states; anticipate 25 awards

Implementation Timeline: 1 year

- Dec 31, 2025 – Dec. 31, 2026

Maximum Award: \$500K- \$15M

- IL applied for \$14,906,142 with an opportunity for <\$3m more

Award Date: Anticipate hearing by December 30th

Redacted Application will be posted on IDEC website.

Federal Updates

- Last ELC-Ad Hoc of 2025 held last week. Shared info on:
 - Supporting Illinois Families Toolkit (posted on IDEC website)
 - Current Attendance Exemptions for CCAP
- Continuing Resolution for Federal Budget set to expire next month



TAC in Review: Our Journey So Far

TAC Year 1

A Snapshot of Where We Began (December 2023 – December 2024)

Year 1 prioritized relationship-building, shared purpose, and internal structures for reviewing stakeholder input. Throughout the year, the TAC moved from grounding and meaning-making to deep analysis of input centered around the question, “what do families need in a new system?”

Early Childhood Education and Care Transition Advisory Committee

December 14, 2023
5:30-7:00pm



Year 1: Months 1 – 3

- TAC relationship-building
- Build norms, common knowledge, and language
- Get to know the transition consultants and their roles
- Establish a shared definition of equity and family-centered thinking

Year 1: Months 4-8

- Deep dive into family engagement findings and meaning making
- Unpack ongoing feedback and findings from transition areas and Regional Listening Sessions

Year 1: Months 9-12

- Process family engagement findings and meaning making continued
- Synthesize data and identify gaps in interim report

TAC Year 2

How Our Work Has Evolved (January – December 2025)

Year 2 focused on sharpening the TAC's role within the broader transition and making connections across engagement and design spaces. Members deepened meaning-making, reflected on emerging insights, and informed proposals, ensuring the work remained equitable and family-centered.



Year 2: Months 1 – 3

- Discuss ways to enhance meaning-making processes
- Strengthen connections between existing transition engagement and design spaces
- Connect the dots across workgroups and TAC

Year 2: Months 4-8

- Reflect on emerging insights from family service workgroups
- Inform a data infrastructure vision at IDEC
- Learn about emerging transition redesign projects

Year 2: Months 9-12

- Continue informing the transition redesign workstreams' processes and scope and emerging recommendations
- Share insights to ensure they equitably center families and providers

TAC plays an essential role informing transition efforts

- The TAC, based on the lived experiences of individual TAC members and an understanding of the community input collected through the transition, serves in an **advisory function to inform the process of system redesign, make connections across priority workstreams, and review recommendations to ensure that proposals equitably center children and families.**
- Collectively, **TAC provides a bird's eye view across redesign efforts**, elevating critical questions, surfacing potential unintended consequences, and **providing directional input** for IDEC and workgroups.
- **IDEC relies on the expertise of individual TAC members** through formal and informal feedback and channels such as 1-1 conversations, small group discussions, and TAC member participation in transition workgroups.

Connecting the Dots Across Workgroups and TAC

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

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

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

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

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

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

TAC

A decorative graphic consisting of several yellow hexagons arranged in a cluster on the right side of the slide.

TAC'S ROLE WITHIN THE TRANSITION

Transition Advisory Committee (TAC) ★

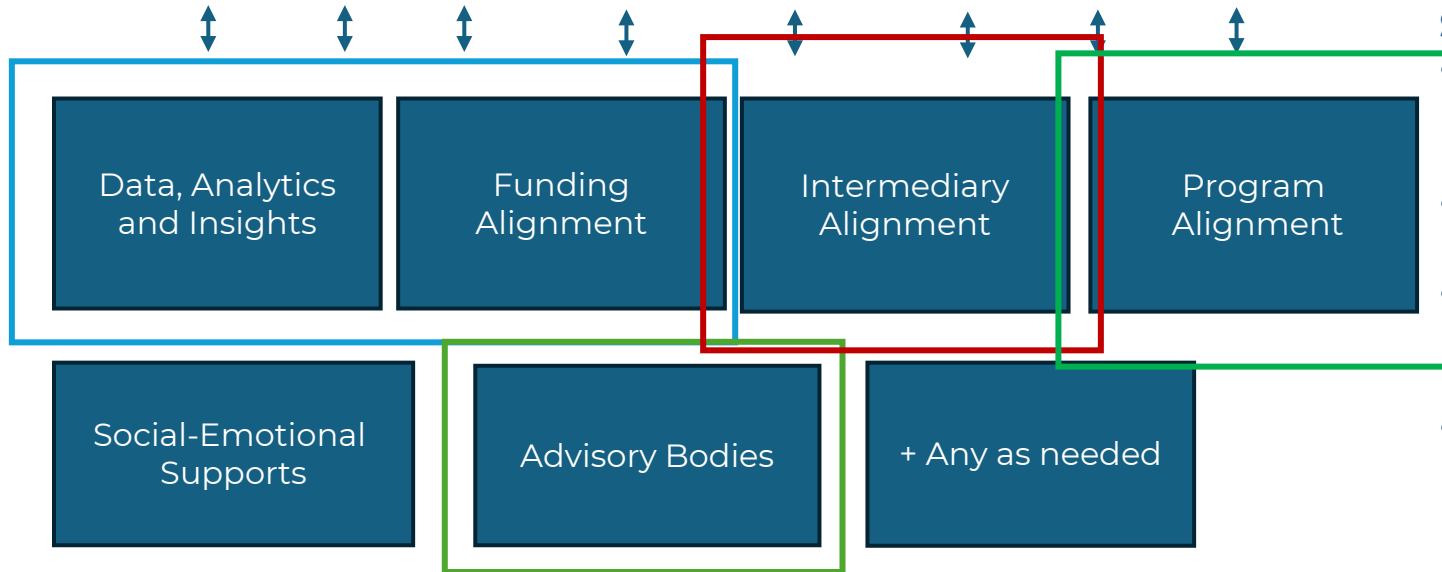
Family Services Workgroups (FSWs): Family articulation, design, redesign of supports they need alongside providers articulating what they need to deliver for families.



FSWs

- Largest stakeholder group is family/parents
- Second largest stakeholder group is provider

Support Workgroups: Actions that enable innovations in systems and processes



Support Workgroups

- Building systems in service to programs families want/need
- Starting with mapping current state
- Starting with mechanics of alignment
- Innovations come or go through Family Service Wgs.

TAC'S ROLE WITHIN THE TRANSITION

The TAC has informed the Transition redesign workstreams to ensure they equitably centered families and providers. This includes:

- **Processing feedback from over 9,000 stakeholder engagement touchpoints through an equity and family-centered lens**
- Informing the design of the **birth to three co-design sprint** based on community input and TAC member expertise
- Providing feedback on **ChiByDesign's Service Blueprint process**
- Informing the design of the **licensing co-design sprint** based on community input and TAC member expertise
- Providing feedback on the development of **Family Portraits**
- Providing feedback on the **funding design workgroup's** scope and objectives and making meaning of emerging insights from workgroup discussions
- Providing feedback on the **Program Standard Alignment workstream's** scope and objectives
- Highlighting opportunities to enhance equitable access for families and providers through **data and technology** and providing feedback on ECIDS legislation (enacted in 2025)

TAC Process Contributions

Illinois Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Regional Listening Session Findings

Prepared by
Afton Partners



The TAC has also informed the state's processes and systems to ensure they equitably center families and providers through:

- Better leveraging and making meaning of public input
- Thinking about when to gather broad vs. focused feedback
- Identifying various entry points for gathering family and provider input
- Establishing equitable processes for making meaning of family input (i.e., family portraits, equity framework)
- Piloting ideas and strategies

TAC Year 2 Reflection Activity

Please share your general reflections or wins from this process so far.

- *Which moment during your time together has stood out as the most meaningful?*
- *What has been your favorite contribution the TAC has made so far?*
- *How have you contributed to the TAC's growth during Year 1 and Year 2?*

Individual reflection in session. Meeting will resume momentarily.

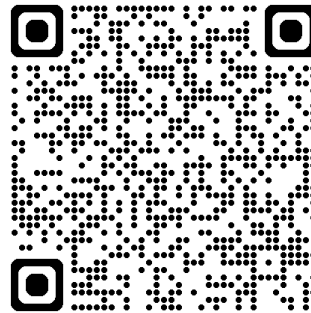
Padlet Links – TAC Year 2 Reflection

Non-TAC public participants may:

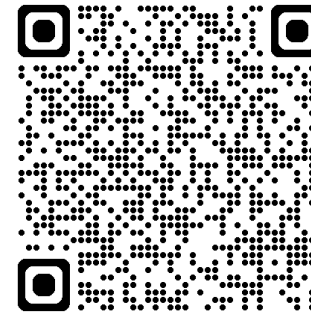
- Respond to the discussion questions individually via **Padlets**
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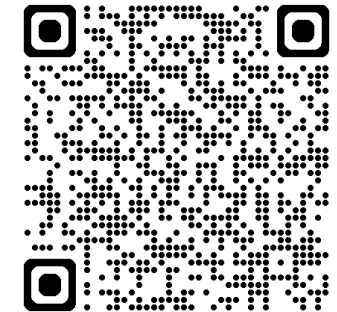
Advocates



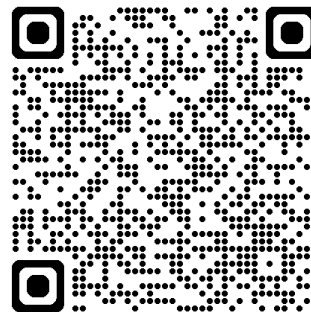
Families/Familias



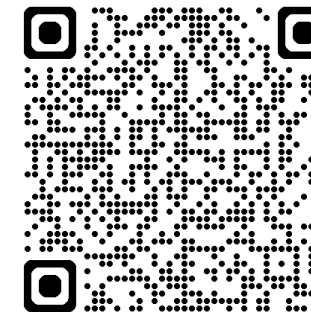
Providers/Proveedores



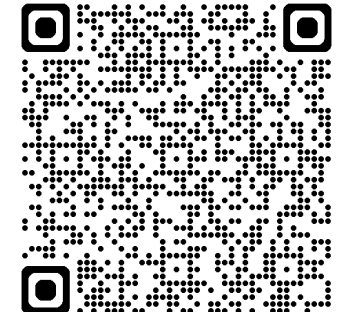
Service Orgs



State & Local Agencies



All other roles





Workstream Deep Dive: Advisory Workgroup





FORESIGHT LAW+POLICY

Illinois DEC Advisory Groups Planning Workgroup: Draft Desired End State

November 2025

Overview

- Who we are
- Where we are in our process
- What we've agreed to so far
- What comes next



Where We Are In Building Recommendations



Our Statutory Charge

- By July 1, 2026, the Department shall create or designate an advisory body to counsel the Department on an ongoing basis, ensuring the Department functions with transparency, operates with a commitment to centering racial equity and to meaningful inclusion of parent, early childhood service provider, and other public stakeholder engagement, feedback, and counsel, including the creation of committees or working groups, and devotes appropriate attention to data collection and timely public reporting. This advisory body's membership shall include representation from both public and private organizations, and its membership shall reflect the regional, racial, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity of the State to ensure representation of the needs of all Illinois children and families.

– 325 ILCS 3/1-35

But We Are Taking a Broader Approach

We are looking at IDEC's entire advisory function and how it hears from its constituents.

- This includes advisory groups but isn't limited to them

Our Approach to Building Recommendations

1. We have developed draft recommendations for the desired end state: what do we want the advisory function to look like at IDEC?
 - Our draft has some outstanding issues or open questions – which is fine for now, we will plug those holes later as needed
2. We are now working on analyzing the current state
3. After that we will discuss how to get from the current state to the desired end state: identify immediate next steps -- and ongoing processes for IDEC as the advisory function evolves

This draft was meant to be shared with partners to solicit their feedback, which the workgroup will address when we get to step 3 above.



Proposed Desired Future State



What We're Going to Do Today

Today you will see a draft proposal for the “desired end state.”

- Nothing is finalized – if you have any concerns, please raise them!
 - We will bring those concerns back to the Advisory Workgroup.
- If you have additional thoughts after the meeting please let us know.
- If there are other ways our work can intersect with yours, please let us know.

In the Draft Plan

The Draft Plan includes the following sections:

- Measuring impact
- Engaging the entire advisory ecosystem
- Direct engagement
- Advisory groups: What and who
- Advisory groups: How (including family and community engagement)

Measuring Impact (1 of 3)

- The advisory function will be successful if:
 - The Department is regularly seeking feedback on critical questions relating to policy and operations. The early childhood community believes that when there are major directional questions being considered, the Department will engage with its partners before answering them. Advisory groups can also raise issues on their own that they believe could be important to the Department.
 - The Department is regularly acting on feedback it receives to produce policies that are equitable and inclusive.
 - The Department is communicating to its partners about how it used the feedback it received. When the Department receives feedback that it cannot or will not act on, it communicates clearly the reasons why it cannot or will not.
- These actions create a cycle where Department partners believe that their input will be valued and continue to provide it.

Measuring Impact (2 of 3)

- The advisory function will be successful if:
 - IDEC is taking steps to build awareness about its advisory function, and a wide range of people – diverse across geography, roles, demographic, linguistical, and other factors -- are in fact aware of engagement opportunities.
 - A wide range of people are actually participating in the advisory function through multiple entry points.
 - The advisory function provides transparency to the early childhood community.
 - The advisory function continues to evolve as needed to meet the needs of the agency and community.
 - The advisory function takes into account the lived experience of the state's families and providers, including families who have not been served by the system.

Measuring Impact (3 of 3)

- To measure impact, the Department should conduct outreach asking stakeholders about the advisory function
 - This measurement should not be limited to surveys, but should also include focused conversations
 - The measurement of impact should reach across multiple populations, including providers, families, and those least well served by the system
 - The process of measuring impact should be ongoing and embedded, not just episodic
 - The process of collecting this input should be of minimal burden, and where possible should be combined with other engagement opportunities
 - The Department should use technology where possible to make it easier to provide input
- Consider having a dashboard or other method of transparently tracking input
- Impact should be measured with a regular cadence, perhaps quarterly

Engaging the Entire Advisory Ecosystem

- The advisory ecosystem includes local advisory bodies that collect community-level feedback. The group will come back and revisit this issue after further study of the current landscape.
 - The group will consider what kinds of activities the agency might support at the local level.
 - The group will consider how the agency should work with and/or build on existing resources, including the 39 Birth to Five Councils and Head Start Policy Councils.
 - The group will consider what channels need to be established to work with community-level leaders.

Direct Engagement

- The Department will have multiple channels for direct engagement to seek input and direction in addition to advisory groups.
 - This could include focus groups or focused conversations.
 - It could also include social media or texting opportunities.
 - This direct engagement should be available in multiple languages.
- These channels of engagement will be distinct from the Department's efforts to provide customer service or constituent services; these are about changes to policy and practice, not just about resolving individual situations.
 - The Department's customer service and constituent service functions should feed into its advisory function.

Advisory Groups: State Advisory Council

- The Department will ultimately need to have a single lead advisory group, which will be designated as the state's advisory council under the Head Start Act (one of several relevant federal requirements). Federal law defines some minimal requirements for membership in this group and topics it must address, but the workgroup can add to those recommendations.
 - Federal law requires the state to include a mix of state agency representatives and organizational representatives, with the freedom to add other members as desired.
 - The workgroup has emphasized the importance of including providers and families, including those least well served by the system (more on this in later slides).
 - The workgroup has discussed the importance of having providers and families included in ways that avoid isolation and tokenism.
 - The workgroup has also discussed ensuring that other partner agencies are included.

DRAFT

Advisory Groups: The Full Range of Advisory Bodies (1 of 2)

- Historically there have been various other advisory groups that all have different – and sometimes overlapping – responsibilities.
 - The federal requirements for the State Advisory Council are broad, and include a wide mix of issues. Other required advisory bodies tend to be more specialized.
 - It may be useful to have different members of groups appointed by different leaders, and to ensure that there are enough members appointed from outside the agency to provide balance.
 - Term limits may be a useful tool to ensure fresh perspective on an ongoing basis.
 - As we have discussed, federal and state laws also require advisory bodies on topics including child care and early childhood special education.
 - IDEC should have an “air traffic control” function to ensure coordination among these groups.
 - IDEC should also ensure coordination with other agencies to ensure that IDEC’s advisory function is working well with other agency advisory functions, and not placing too great a demand on stakeholders.

DRAFT

Advisory Groups: The Full Range of Advisory Bodies (2 of 2)

- Historically there have been various other advisory groups that all have different – and sometimes overlapping – responsibilities.
 - This workgroup can make recommendations for how these other advisory bodies should be organized and populated, including whether or not they should be part of the state advisory council (e.g., subcommittee). That issue will be revisited after examining the current state.
 - The workgroup believes that reorganization should take place in a context that is sensitive to the fact that for many providers and families, participating in an advisory body is more difficult than providing feedback for other channels.
 - A major goal of this advisory workgroup is minimizing the burden on participants.
 - There will be a need to balance having standing advisory bodies with short-term task-oriented groups.
 - There are benefits to having short-term task-oriented groups, but having too many can be burdensome.

All Advisory Groups: Regular Practices

- All advisory bodies should engage in practices that support provider and family engagement, including:
 - Conduct on-boarding to ensure that all members understand their role and the advisory group's expectations
 - Scheduling advisory groups when providers and families can participate
 - Establishing norms of participation in an advisory group that are welcoming and inclusive
 - Sharing materials in advance
 - Avoiding jargon
 - Supporting participation in multiple languages
 - Multiple ways to engage in the meeting
 - Strong facilitation to encourage participation

Advisory Groups: Engaging Families (1 of 2)

- To engage families, IDEC should:
 - Engage with families and support them before and after meetings, building ongoing relationships and making them feel welcome. Good communication takes place in the context of relationships, and authentic engagement is crucial.
 - This may include providing training and support to family representatives joining advisory bodies.
 - Ensure that diverse families are participating -- including immigrant and refugee populations, families not well served by the system, and families from around the state.
 - Ensure that families have multiple opportunities to provide input, including regional and local opportunities and both in-person and virtual forums.
 - Communicate to families about the impact of their engagement.
 - Develop continuous improvement processes to ensure that the state is learning from experience and engaging families more effectively as time goes on.

Advisory Groups: Engaging Families (2 of 2)

- To engage families, IDEC should:
 - Provide opportunities to participate in the family's home language.
 - Leverage existing family engagement efforts, including through Head Start.
 - While there is not unanimity on the subject, in general workgroup members believe families should be paid for their participation.
 - Ensure that families participating in any advisory workgroup should be given space to connect with each other (including across workgroups), with support and staffing to help them succeed in their roles.
 - This space should be voluntary for families and designed by those families to meet their needs.
 - If families have other suggestions for building community the Department should be as responsive to those suggestions as possible.



Discussion



Small Group Discussion

- What resonates with you?
- Is there anything missing?
 - Any details you want to flesh out?
- Any points of connection that our workgroup should be aware of?

Small groups in session. Meeting will resume momentarily.

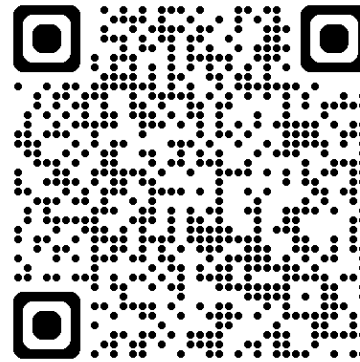
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- Provide feedback via survey
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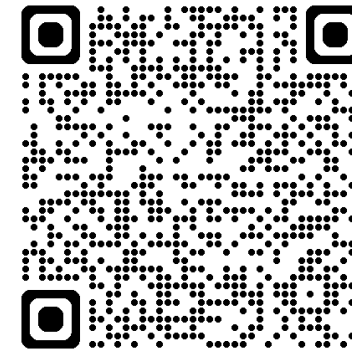


Padlet Links – Advisory Workgroup

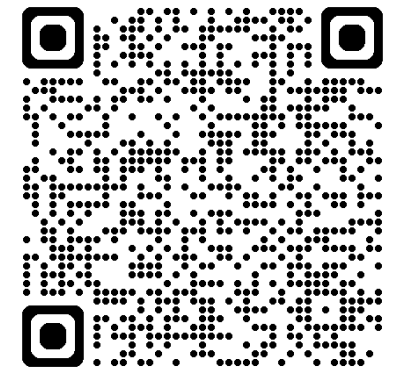
Advocates



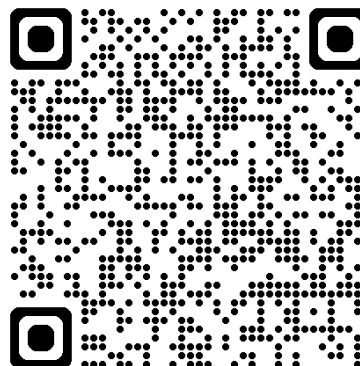
Families/Familias



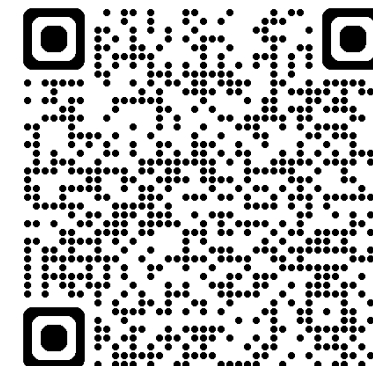
Providers/Provedores



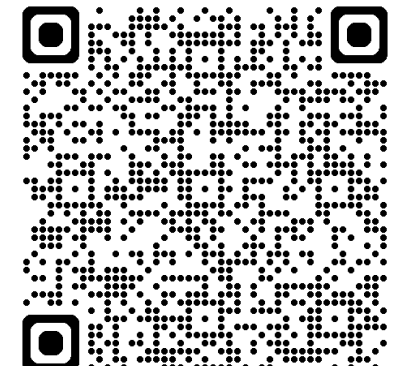
Service Orgs



State & Local Agencies



All other roles



Lunch and other refreshments will be provided for TAC members.

For members of the public, there are multiple options to purchase food within a few minutes drive, including:

- Maggie Miley's
- Pizza Payaa
- La Bamba Mexican Restaurant
- The Rock Restaurant
- Jimmy John's
- Chipotle Mexican Grill
- Avanti's Italian Restaurant



Lunch Time

45 minutes

Community Builder



How do you want to show up to Year 3 of TAC?

- Sort through the various stickers on the tables.
- Choose one that metaphorically represents you and what you want to bring to Year 3 of TAC.
- Example: You may choose a tree because you want to come in stable, grounded with deep roots in your role/perspective.
- Metaphor: *“The sticker I chose to represent me as a (insert role) on TAC during Year 3 is.... Because...”*



Workstream Deep Dive: Program Standards Alignment Updates

Agenda

1. Review the goals and outputs of the Program Standards workstream
2. Share initial takeaways from one-on-one conversations
3. Gather input from TAC

Program Standards Alignment Goal Deliverables



Program Standard Alignment Workstream | Proposed goal and activities

Goal: To develop **recommendations for aligning birth-to-five program standards and expectations** for programs transitioning to the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC), with a vision of a *continuum of quality* that supports all children's development and *successful transition to kindergarten*.

Activities include:

- 1) **Informing a vision for standards based on what children and families want and need** from high-quality ECEC services, **and what providers need** to deliver on those wants and needs.
- 2) **Reviewing current program standards and requirements** for programs transitioning to IDEC, and the extent to which there is alignment, discrepancies, and/or gaps in standards and requirements across similar services (i.e., within early care and education, within home visiting, within early intervention).
- 3) Identifying opportunities to **articulate a common set of developmentally appropriate best practices** that are research-based, culturally inclusive, and support seamless experiences for children and families across services.
- 4) Identifying opportunities to **remove undue administrative burden, redundancies, or barriers** for families to access high-quality programs, and for providers to engage in high-quality standards.

Potential outputs from the Program Standard Alignment Workstream

Deliverables/Outcome

1. A **unified vision** and **guiding principles for program standards**, co-designed with stakeholders.
2. A set of **recommendations for program standards alignment** across key areas based on workgroup input, values, and guiding principles, that is informed by an analysis of risk, benefit, and implementation feasibility.
3. **Crosswalk of program standards** highlighting the extent to which there is alignment, discrepancies, and/or gaps in standards and requirements across similar services (i.e., within early care and education, within home visiting, etc.).
4. Recommendations for **updates to early learning and development state standards and guidelines** (IELG 0-3 and IELDS 3-5).

PRELIMINARY

This process will review program standards in early care and education, home visiting, and early intervention

Early Care and Education

- Licensing
- CCAP
- ECBG- PFA/PFAE/PI Center
- ExceleRate
- Head Start
- NAEYC
- *Federal - CCDF guidelines
- *State IELG and IELDS

Home Visiting

- ISBE PI-HV administrative rules
- State Funding IDHS Home Visiting requirements
- Federal guidelines for federally funded Home Visiting programs (MIECHV)
- Early Head Start

Early Intervention

- Mostly federal standards (IDEA Part C) and state guidelines from IDHS

This work will be informed by deep stakeholder engagement, research, landscape analysis and workgroup engagement



Stakeholder Input

- 1-1 engagement with stakeholders to understand current state standards and requirements
- Transition engagement data to understand what families and providers want and need and current program implementation challenges and successes
- Cross-agency engagement

Research and Examples

- Current child development research
- Current research on developmentally appropriate practices
- National frameworks (e.g., Head Start, NAEYC, NAFCC)
- Other state examples

Workgroup

A representative group that will:

- provide context and background on the current state,
- inform guiding principles,
- identify potential risks and
- provide directional feedback and recommendation inputs

One-on-one conversations are informing our understanding of the current state of program standards

21 conversations complete

- ✓ IDHS, ISBE, INCCRRA, CELFE, CCR&R, Head Start Association, All Children Thrive, Start Early, StarNet, and ROEs

More conversations scheduled

- ✓ DCFS, City of Chicago, providers, state agency staff

Initial takeaways

- Children's challenging behaviors create a need for lower ratios and more trauma-informed care
- Screenings are needed to identify children's needs, and this practice is not currently required across different program standards
- Licensing is helpful for identifying health and safety practices, but additional support and guidance is needed to create environments that support children's development
- Agencies and organizations use early learning and state developmental standards -IELG 0-3 and IELDS 3-5- differently

Discussion Questions

1. Do these high-level outtakes resonate?
2. What questions do you have about the work ahead?
3. What should IDEC be mindful of as the agency begins to establish and engage a workgroup?





Workstream Deep Dive: Licensing Updates



ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
EARLY
CHILDHOOD

**Civic
Consulting**
alliance

Reimagining Child Care Licensing in Illinois

Transition Advisory Council update
December 2025



Why we're here today

- Update on ongoing work during the transition
- Highlight progress on reimagining background checks and exemptions
- Gather your input and feedback

Agenda

Project background

Background checks

Exemptions

Discussion

An important starting point was to establish a vision and supporting design principles to ground the effort

GOAL: Design and advance a comprehensive, equitable model for child care licensing that is safe for families, simpler for providers, and anchored in a continuum of quality.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- ✓ **Prioritize quality and safety** considerations to provide best in class experience for families
- ✓ Streamline process to **reduce burden** on providers and licensing staff
- ✓ Update legislation and rules to align to **current best practices** in childcare
- ✓ Clarify legislation and rules to **reduce complexity** for providers and subjectivity for licensing reps
- ✓ Account for regional, racial, and socioeconomic differences to ensure changes are **culturally responsive**
- ✓ Invest in **staff development and well-being** to strengthen the workforce and sustain system improvements



Project background & context

As early childhood programs and services for young children unify over the transition to IDEC, one of the new agency's top priorities is **reimagining the child care licensing process**.

Earlier this year, Civic Consulting Alliance and DLA Piper began to support IDEC leadership with a review of child care licensing rules and processes from an efficiency and best practices perspective to chart a path forward that prioritizes simplicity and safety.

Civic Consulting Alliance and DLA Piper have continued partnering with the IDEC and DCFS teams to reimagine child care **background checks** and **license exemptions**, which are top priorities for IDEC leadership due to the complexity of the issues and the far-reaching impact of solutions.



Through extensive stakeholder engagement, the project team aligned on four focus areas to focus on



Background checks



Exemptions



External communication



DCLR training & support

Examples of pain points:

- Wait time
- Tied to provider vs. individual
- Provider adjudicates hits

- Time-consuming to review
- Rules are too ambiguous and less restrictive
- Lack of clarity behind denials

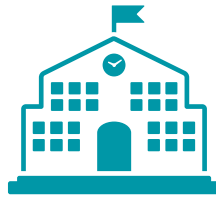
- Inconsistent updates shared with providers
- Outdated / non-nuanced information shared on websites

- Inconsistent interpretations of rules
- Caseloads too high
- Additional support needed for specific types of childcare

Phase 2 continued to engage stakeholders to investigate potential updates to background checks and exemptions



Background checks



Exemptions



External communication



DCLR training & support

Next steps for phase 2

Civic Consulting Alliance and DLA Piper have continued partnering with the IDEC and DCFS teams to reimagine these two processes, which are top priorities for IDEC leadership due to the complexity of the issues and the far-reaching impact of solutions

The IDEC team will lead the implementation of near-term and long-term recommendations to improve the child care licensing experience for providers and DCLRs alike

Background checks



Stakeholder feedback emphasized the need to untangle provider and state roles in the current background checks process



Delays and inefficiencies

Corresponding pain points:

- Long wait times to receive clearance, causing frustration for providers and DCLRs alike
- Manual, paper-based processes and mail submissions remain, leading to delays and incomplete application
- Hard to find available fingerprinting locations



Provider and State roles

Corresponding pain points:

- Background check linked to provider rather than applicant, making it harder for personnel to move between facilities
- Providers responsible for adjudicating waivable offenses

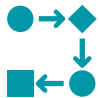
Focus for Phase 2

There are some key changes we are exploring if background checks for child care move to IDEC



Core responsibilities

- Day care facilities, license-exempt facilities, foster and host homes, adoptions, and child welfare agencies
- Day care centers and homes, license-exempt facilities, and substitute pools



Processes

- Background checks and fingerprints tied to provider
- Adjudicates waivable offenses for providers; signs off on provider recommendations

- **Checks and prints tied to individual**
- **Adjudicates waivable offenses for everyone**



Tools & technology

- 718 form (mailed; digitization in progress)
- (External) Center results available online, mailed to home providers, and emailed to DCLRs
- (Internal) Results and records stored in internal IMSA system

- **New digital authorization form**
- **(External) Instant notifications for results and cleared individuals end up in IDEC system**
- **(Internal) Results and records stored in IDEC system**

In the imagined future state, fingerprint data will be primarily linked to the individual, and IDEC will adjudicate all waivable offenses



Fingerprint data

From provider to individual

- Prints will be primarily linked to individual
 - Individuals will be able to more easily transfer among providers
 - *[pending legislation]* Individuals may be able to get a background check before applying for a job, allowing for faster initial hiring process



Adjudicating waivable offenses

From provider to State

- IDEC will adjudicate all waivable offenses
 - IDEC will issue clearances to work in child care
 - Providers will only see whether someone is eligible or ineligible for employment

Exemptions



Three key pain points about child care license exemptions came from stakeholder feedback

Rules for exemption eligibility are ambiguous
(Agency staff and providers)

Exemption applications are difficult and time intensive to review
(Licensing supervisors)

Communication around decisions with the review process is slow and unclear
(Providers)

We convened design sessions to reimagine exemptions under IDEC based on the three key pain points identified by stakeholders

Participants included...

IDEC Leadership, DCFS Leadership, IDHS (CCAP) staff, and DLA Piper

...who put forth potential solutions based on a shared vision for exemptions:

Clarify exemptions legislation, rules, and processes to ensure there are clear pathways for providing safe and high-quality child care under different programs to best accommodate families and reduce burden on providers and licensing staff

Design session attendees highlighted that the primary drivers for exemptions should be...

- 1) the type of programming, including the frequency and duration of care, and**
- 2) whether oversight from other agencies exists to ensure the safety of children**

Design sessions created a framework for exemptions grounded in level of oversight to more clearly classify different types of programming

Level of oversight			
No oversight (Exempt)	Oversight by other agency (Non-IDEC oversight)	Partial oversight by IDEC (Alternative licensure)	Full oversight by IDEC (Full licensure)
Child care that operates without any licensing or regulatory oversight; no reporting or compliance obligations are required	Programs that are exempt from IDEC licensure but must comply with requirements or reporting from another regulatory agency	Programs that do not require full licensure but must meet health and safety, including CCAP, requirements	Programs that require complete licensing and ongoing compliance with all IDEC rules and regulations

Then, design sessions used the oversight framework to inform proposed changes and additions to license-exempt programs

Level of oversight			
No oversight (Exempt)	Oversight by other agency (Non-IDEC oversight)	Partial oversight by IDEC (Alternative licensure)	Full oversight by IDEC (Full licensure)
Child care that operates without any licensing or regulatory oversight; no reporting or compliance obligations are required	Programs that are exempt from IDEC licensure but must comply with requirements or reporting from another regulatory agency	Programs that do not require full licensure but must meet some IDEC requirements	Programs that require complete licensing and ongoing compliance with all IDEC rules and regulations
Proposed program types for future state			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Small-scale care ✓ Drop-in services ✓ Extracurricular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Federal premises ✓ Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Short-term care ✓ Part-day care ✓ Before- and after-care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Day care homes ✓ Day care centers ✓ Group day care homes

Lastly, design sessions proposed requirements based on oversight, using CCAP as the baseline for alternative licensure requirements

Level of oversight			
No oversight (Exempt)	Oversight by other agency (Non-IDEC oversight)	Partial oversight by IDEC (Alternative licensure)	Full oversight by IDEC (Full licensure)
Child care that operates without any licensing or regulatory oversight; no reporting or compliance obligations are required	Programs that are exempt from IDEC licensure but must comply with requirements or reporting from another regulatory agency	Programs that do not require full licensure but must meet some IDEC requirements	Programs that require complete licensing and ongoing compliance with all IDEC rules and regulations
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Types of requirements			
None; CCAP certification and requirements optional	Determined by other agency; CCAP certification and requirements optional	Personnel and business requirements, including CCAP certification requirements	Full degree of licensure requirements related to facilities, personnel, business, and program

Thank you for listening!

- We are continuing to socialize these proposed changes
- Preparing for implementation by resolving implications for:
 - Rules & legislation
 - Technological systems
 - Structures & support needed

For discussion

- What parts of the future-state ideas make sense to you? What needs clarifying?
- What should we keep in mind as we refine exemptions?
- Do you have any questions or thoughts for us?



Break Time
10 minutes

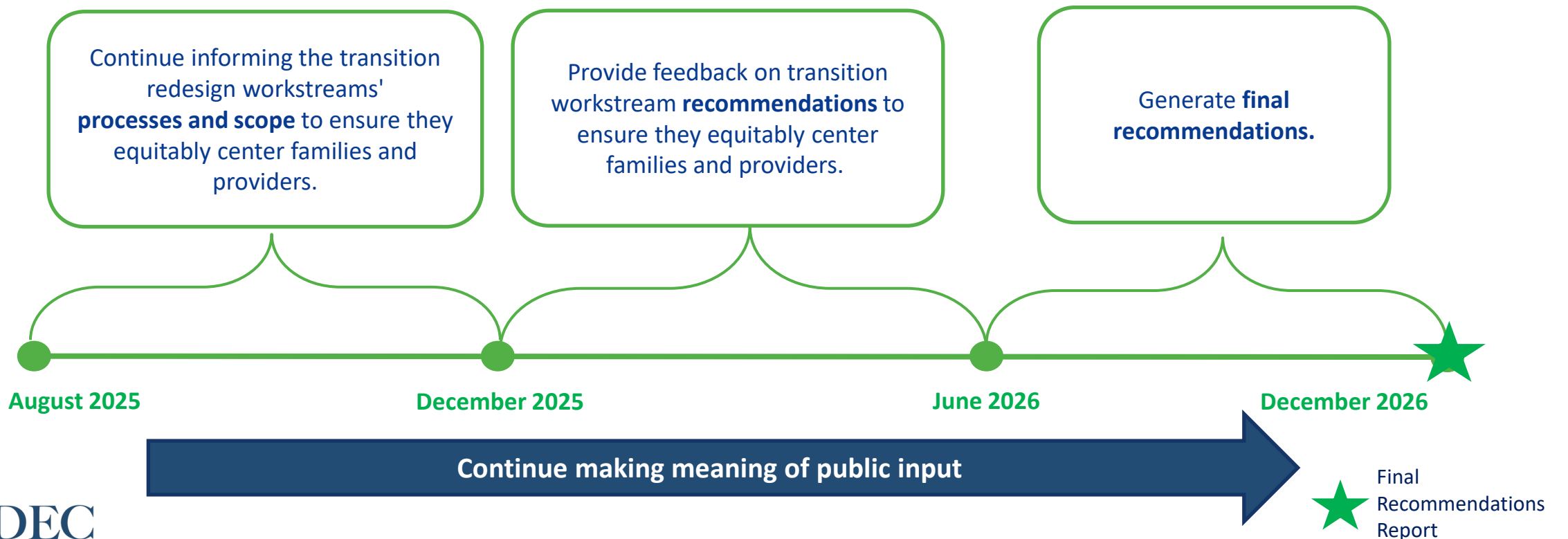




TAC Year 3 – Looking Ahead

TAC Year 3 – *New Timeline*

Originally slated to end in December 2025, the TAC was extended through December 2026! This offers a new timeline for the TAC’s work, with final recommendations now due in December 2026.



TAC Year 3 Arc of Work

Where We're Going (January – December 2026)

Year 3 Goals

- Learn about and provide input on emerging recommendations from transition redesign workstreams and family service workgroups
- Use the TAC Equity Framework to develop a structure for centering equity in meaning making
- Develop final recommendations by December 2026

Year 3: Months 1 – 3

- Operationalize equity in meaning-making
- Receive ChiByDesign Birth to Three and Service Blueprint Updates
- Preview DAI priority metrics and design feature input

Incoming recommendations in Year 3

- ChiByDesign Birth to Three and Service Blueprint
- Funding Design
- Program Standards & Alignment
- Advisory
- Family Service Workgroups

Your Engagement and Feedback ...

- TAC members have had **12-16 members per meeting** so far, with small dips earlier in the year, but overall very strong attendance across the two years of TAC.
- TAC members requested **more time for deeper discussion and exploration of meeting content**. Some TAC members have expressed interest in occasionally longer or differently timed meetings (e.g., afternoons).
- **TAC members overwhelmingly feel the TAC is moving closer to equity**. However, several TAC members emphasized the **need to ensure equity concepts (e.g., family portraits, engagement strategies, metrics) translate into actionable, anti-bias policies** that do not unintentionally reinforce stereotypes or leave out marginalized families.

“I felt the challenge of time during the meeting very strongly - the discussions are getting much meatier and our ability to interact around important ideas are expanding as our relationships deepen, but time constraints don't allow full exploration of ideas and connecting points. I am looking forward to our full-day meeting!”

TAC Year 3 Visioning Activity

Please share your thoughts and feedback for what you'd like to see around the meeting cadence, content, and structure for TAC in Year 3.

- *What does the TAC need to get to recommendations by December 2026?*
- *What is working about our current structure and processes?*
- *What is the ideal content/discussion format for our meetings?*
- *What would you like to change or revisit?*
 - *Meeting cadence and length*
 - *Small group vs. large group balance*
 - *Intro TAC slides*
 - *Other*

Additional Transition Meetings



Home Visiting Funding Subcommittee

- Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 11:30AM-1:00PM

Family, Friend, and Neighbor Funding Subcommittee

- Thursday, December 11, 2025, 5:00PM-6:30PM

Listening and Feedback Session on Licensing Redesign: Exemptions

- Thursday, December 11, 2025, 5:00-6:00PM

Supporting Children with Disabilities & Developmental Delays Workgroup

- Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 12:00-1:00PM

Funding Design Workgroup

- Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 4:30-6:00PM

Data, Analytics, and Insights (DAI) Workgroup

- Thursday, December 18, 2025, 1:00-2:30PM

Supporting Multilingual Learners Workgroup

- Friday, December 19, 2025, 9:00-10:00AM

Advisory Workgroup

- Monday, January 12, 2026, 4:00-5:30PM

Child Care (0-5)/Pre-K Funding Subcommittee

- Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 1:00-2:30PM

Next TAC Meeting:

- Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 5:30-7:00PM

TAC Feedback Survey

Please take a moment to fill out the TAC feedback survey.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdG8kADUM9TG9XRdJaaCMiLHdHiCj7sQ_5PYT4tKsq6yBwp0A/viewform



Next steps and close



- Follow up email to be sent next week with meeting summary.
- TAC members should reach out to Trish Rooney or Bela Moté with any feedback

Thank you!



 @idec_illinois

 @IllinoisDepartmentofEarlyChildhood

 @Illinois Department of Early Childhood

