



Transition Advisory Committee

November 18, 2025
5:30 – 7:00 PM





Welcome and Introductions

Goals and Agenda

Today's Goals

- Build community amongst TAC members
- Provide updates on the transition process
- Learn about and provide feedback on the Funding Design Workgroup's progress
- Learn about and provide feedback on the Workforce Work Stream progress

Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions – 10 min**
- **IDEC Updates – 15 min**
 - Federal updates
 - New IDEC team members
 - Other
- **Funding Design Workgroup Update – 30 min**
 - Presentation & Large Group Discussion
- **Workforce Work Stream Update – 30 min**
 - Presentation (15 minutes)
 - Small Group Discussion (15 minutes)
- **Next Steps – 5 min**

Virtual meeting housekeeping notes



- **Please be on video** as much as possible to support 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 Siri Smillie for any needs**
- If you are experiencing an unstable connection, **switch to phone or close all other applications**
- **This meeting has Spanish translation**
 - Please speak slowly and avoid using acronyms to help us ensure accessible translation
- Materials and minutes will be posted on the IDEC website.
- **TAC Meetings are open to the public**
 - Members of public will be in “listen only” mode during presentations. **Based on your feedback, we now have a public breakout group available during small group discussion sections.**
 - We also have the TAC feedback form and public stakeholder padlets available for anyone to share input. Links will be shared in the chat throughout the meeting.
- **Additional public input will be gathered** in Listening Sessions, surveys, & other forums throughout the Transition process.

TAC Charge and Community Agreements

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.



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.

MINDSET SHIFT

- 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.

TAC introductions



Please respond in the chat:

What is your favorite Thanksgiving food?

Family spotlight

“PLEASE help the ECEC get more pay and support! They are working in high ratio classrooms with children who need more one on one care. Then they go home being burnt out mentally and physically and cannot even pay their bills with what they make.”

- Parent, Advocate, McHenry County





IDEC Updates

Welcome new IDEC staff!

- Arelene Herron, Human Resources Director
- Julie Gilling, Director of Policy
- Jessica Morris, Chief Information Officer (DoIT)
- Brandon Woudenbergh, Deputy General Counsel

Current IDEC TEAM

- 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
- Marilyn Vazquez, Director of Communication
- Erin Von Holten, Budget Director
- Ann Whalen, Chief Transition Design Officer
- Brandon Woudenberg, Deputy General Counsel

Federal Update

- Federal Continuing Resolution (CR) until January 2026
- USDOE changes announced today
- New PDG application released today
- IL ongoing response to provide supports for Immigration Enforcement Actions

JB Pritzker
Governor



Heidi E. Mueller
Director

Non-Regulatory Guidance on Immigration Enforcement Actions at Day Care Facilities October 17, 2025

In Illinois, day care services must be provided regardless of race, color, national origin, citizenship status, or immigration status. Information about a family's immigration status is not required to enroll a child for day care services.

The increased actions and presence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and other such agencies in Chicago and across Illinois has caused significant concern among many providers, parents, and stakeholders.

To ensure that all day care providers understand the steps to take in situations involving immigration enforcement, this non-regulatory guidance outlines important precautions to take in case:

- Immigration enforcement personnel request information from a provider; or
- A child's caregiver (parent, relative, guardian) is detained or deported while picking up or dropping off a child at the day care, or during the time the child is in care.
- Immigration enforcement personnel seek to carry out enforcement action at a day care home or facility.

Resources

- IllinoisImmigrationInfo.org - a comprehensive website with immigration-related information and guidance.

The site offers:

- *Vital information for families with loved ones in detention*
 - *Plain-language explanations of changes to immigration policy*
 - *Know Your Rights information*
 - *Information about how to access free and low-cost immigration legal services*
- [Illinois Care for Kids](#) – Know your Rights page
 - ISBE's [Non-Regulatory Guidance](#) on Immigration Enforcement
 - ISBE's [Newcomer Resources](#)
 - Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights [website](#)
 - Illinois Attorney General [website](#)

Resources from The Resurrection Project:

- Request a KYR training for your organization [here](#)
- Sign up for a regularly scheduled virtual TRP KYR training [here](#)
- More information at <https://www.illinoisimmigrationinfo.org/know-your-rights>
- Emergency Planning Guides [here](#).

If there are additional resources you would like to share, please come off mute or add comments in the chat

IDEC Budget Listening Session Update

Event Details | October 22nd

Public was invited to **submit recommendations for the state's fiscal year 2027 budget** for providing quality child care and education services for children birth to five and their families.

Event Participation | By the numbers

187

Attended

105

Attended
for **more than 1**
hour

14

Provided **verbal**
testimony during
webinar

13

Provided **written**
testimony via
email

90

Provided priorities
via **registration**
link

Key Takeaways

Funding requests (increases):

- ☐ \$120M for CCAP
- ☐ \$75M for ECBG
- ☐ \$50M for Smart Start Workforce
- ☐ \$40M for Early Intervention (EI)
- ☐ \$5M for Home Visiting

Anecdotal themes:

- ☐ **Workforce:** Additional compensation needed to attract and retain teachers
- ☐ **EI:** Rate increases needed to attract providers and increase capacity
- ☐ **Teacher training and scholarships:** Need to invest in those who invest in kids
- ☐ More to do to address transportation needs and mental health supports

WORKGROUPS & OTHER TRANSITION UPDATES

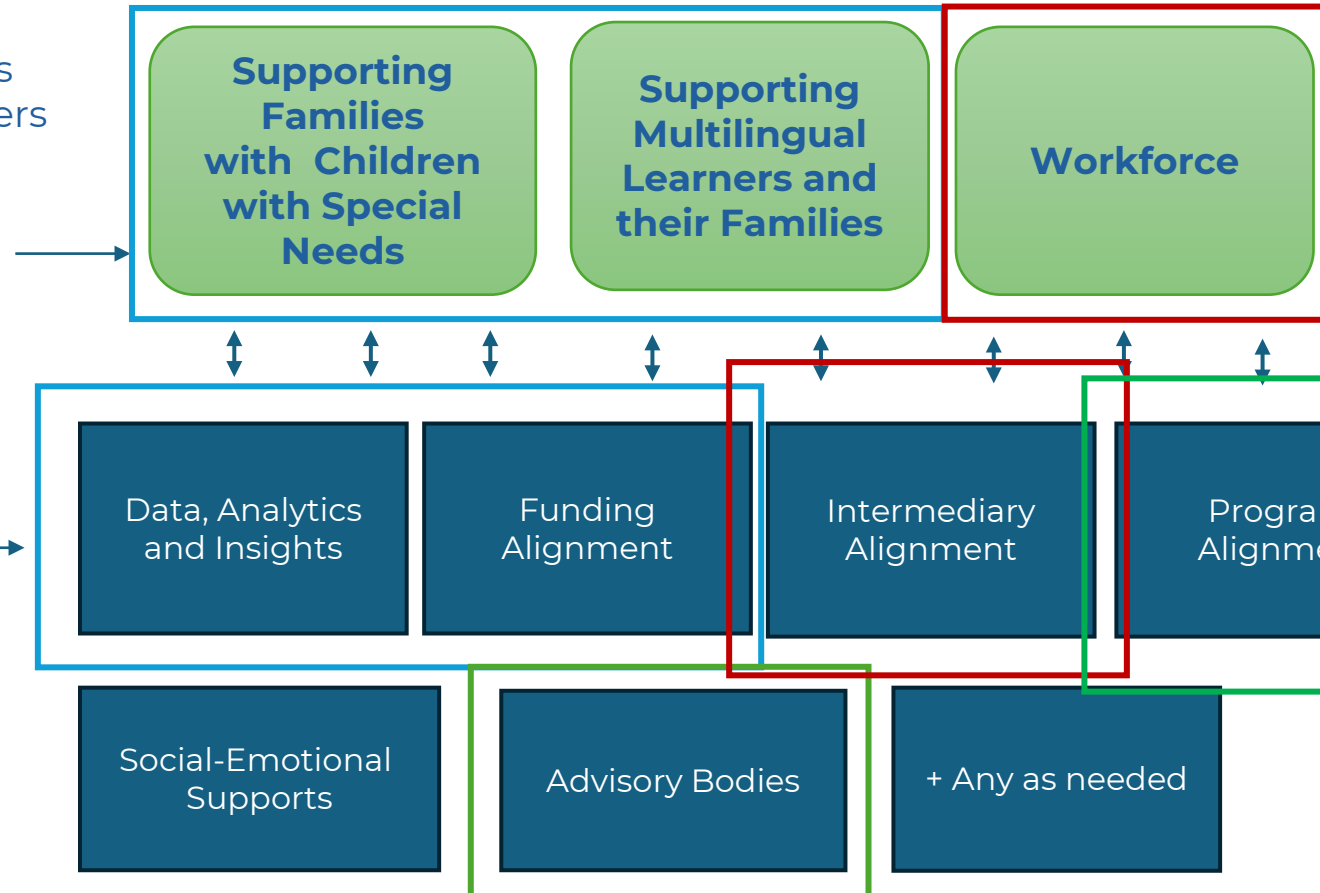
Transition Advisory Committee (TAC)

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

- 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.

Support Workgroups:

Actions that enable innovations in systems and processes



Funding Design Workgroup & Subcommittee Update

November 18, 2025





Background on Funding Design Workgroup

Funding Design Goals

Develop a funding system for Illinois' early childhood education and care programs that:



Promotes an **equitable, inclusive, family-centered system** of quality choice for families of all races, home languages, incomes, and geographies



Works toward **fair resources for all types of providers**, responsive to family choice



Supports **opportunity, fair compensation, and high-quality working conditions** for the ECEC workforce



Improves **predictability and stability for families, providers, and the workforce**

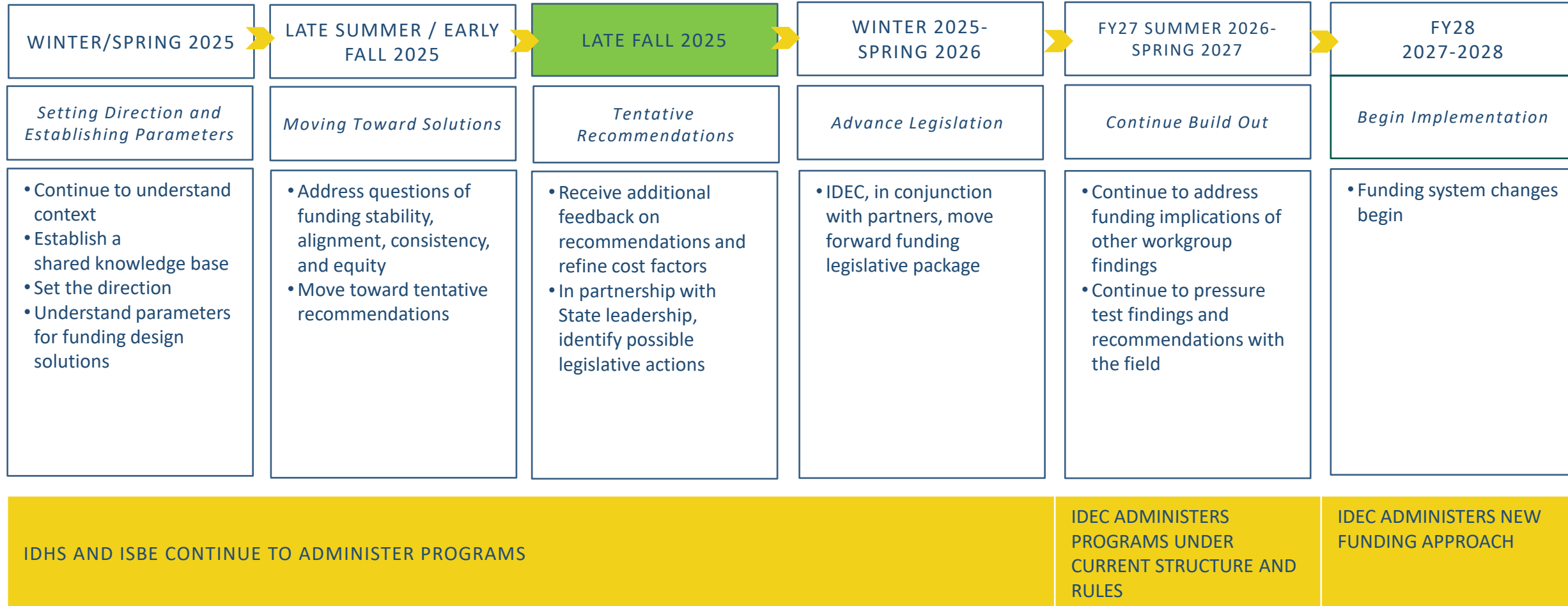


Reduces complexity and burden on ECEC providers



Promotes long-term **system-wide sustainability** through clear and balanced priorities and effective use of all available funds (federal, state, local, and private)

Anticipated Timeline



Funding Design Working Group Process: Where we've been

Winter 2024-2025

Spring 2025

Summer 2025

Built Knowledge & Set Context

- ✓ Aligned on goals for the project
- ✓ Built knowledge about funding design principles
- ✓ Heard from parents, providers and state administrators about current experience
- ✓ Considered valuable aspects of current ECEC funding to build upon

Established Parameters

- ✓ Grappled with funding system tensions, including universal vs targeted approach
- ✓ Learned from other states and countries
- ✓ Connected to other workgroups supporting the transition to the new agency

Moving Towards Solutions

- ✓ Launched Funding Distribution & Alignment Subcommittees
- ✓ Began addressing questions of funding stability, alignment, consistency, and equity
- ✓ Moving towards tentative alignment and distribution recommendations

Emerging Design Principles – drawing on input from communities, working groups, and state leadership

1

Reduce administrative burden by streamlining current funding streams

- Combine state funds into fewer funding streams with similar purposes and recipients
- Reduce burden of managing multiple state and federal funding streams by aligning requirements wherever possible
- Simplify applications and reporting wherever possible

2

Builds a transparent road map to full costs of early learning services that enables equity and efficiency

- Ensures **operational funding** from all sources that is adequate to deliver services that meet licensing standards for all children and allows transparency in how much existing funding from all sources covers costs
- Enables a **family-centered definition of quality**, and is tied to the **services families want to see** based on children's needs, including for children with disabilities and developmental delays, multi-lingual learners, and historically underserved communities
- Promotes **competitive workforce compensation**
- Reflects the **different structure** of costs and services in centers, homes, and school districts across programs and requirements
- **Maximizes** federal funds

3

Assess gaps between current funding and need to inform equitable prioritization for future investments

4

Work for existing and new programs and programs with a mix of children being served by **public and private funds**

- New programs can enter the system through a transparent process that assesses quality, capacity, and community need
- Funding design incorporates local funding and parent tuition alongside state and federal dollars while acknowledging the needs of providers who serve school-age children



Summer Subcommittees Update

Two subcommittees met over the summer to more deeply engage with funding alignment and distribution questions.

Funding Alignment Subcommittee

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can funding across all programs be better aligned and organized in service of our goals?

Funding Distribution Subcommittee

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How should the state distribute funds to providers in a way that best supports our goals?

Preliminary Funding Design Recommendations – Summary

Identified Challenge

Preliminary Funding Design Recommendations

Funding misalignment

Align funding streams with common purposes, simplifying from 12 to 4 core funding streams

Funding instability

Prioritize predictable and stable distribution strategies, providing base funding through non-competitive grants/contracts wherever possible

Funding does not match cost

Define long-term targets for full funding that covers the cost of services that families want and need*

**More work needed*

Challenges



Preliminary Recommendations

Challenge Definition:

- Current misalignment across funding streams creates confusion, frustration, and sometimes arbitrary barriers for both families and providers
- A majority of providers do not utilize multiple public funding streams, potentially due to the complexity and administrative burden

Proposed Criteria for alignment:

- Similar or highly connected purpose
- Common recipient pool
- Similar child/family and provider eligibility
- Enough flexibility in federal requirements, or ability to align state requirements to federal requirements

Across all state-managed funding streams, the following two groupings meet the criteria for alignment:

Cluster of early learning & care funding streams:

- CCAP/CCDF
- ECBG PFA/E
- ECBG PI-Center Based
- Smart Start Workforce Grants and Quality Supports

1

Proposed: One aligned funding stream for **child care and pre-k programs**

Cluster of home visiting funding streams:

- MIECHV
- MCHV
- IDHS-HV
- ECBG PI-Home Visiting

2

Proposed: One aligned funding stream for **home visiting programs**

Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education
continue to be funded separately

3

4

Challenge Definitions



Preliminary Recommendations

- Uncertainty about funding makes it difficult to plan and create seats, leading to instability and limited access for providers and families
- Competitive grant applications make access to funding dependent on capacity to write grants, leading to inequities across the state
- Payment is often received after services have been provided, making it difficult for providers to cover expenses

Expand Use of Non-Competitive Grants or Contracts for Providers Serving Priority Populations:

- Providers know they will be funded as long as they meet eligibility criteria
- Longer-term grants or contracts allow providers to create seats, knowing funding will be available
- Levels the playing field by reducing the need to complete complex competitive grant applications
- Build on current successful examples, including Smart Start Workforce Grants and CCAP Site-Administered Contracts

Continue to Use Vouchers to Maximize Family Choice:

- May be appropriate for providers serving fewer numbers of publicly funded children and license-exempt providers
- Explore shifting to payment in advance

Reserve Use of Competitive Grants for Short-Term or Specialized Funding

- Allows targeting of funds for specific purposes
- Appropriate when assessing recipient readiness is a key criteria for funding

Defining Long Term Funding Targets Preliminary Recommendations

Challenge Definitions



Preliminary Recommendations

- Funding not tied to costs of service provision
- Inequities in funding across the state, not correlated to community need
- Funding is inadequate to provide comprehensive services and compensate staff
- Cost centers and assumptions vary across similar funding stream
- No coordinated process for prioritizing needs across the ECEC system
- Not maximizing federal resources

Define Adequacy-Based Funding Targets

- Provides consistent way of allocating funding on costs, with common definitions and principles across the ECEC system (informed by Program Standards work)
- Accounts for comprehensive services that meet family needs, including needs of children with disabilities and delays and multilingual learners
- Transparently shows gaps between current and needed funding across the state at the provider and regional level

Prioritize “Next Dollar In”

- Develop equitable and transparent strategy for prioritization
- Adequacy analysis will show which providers have the largest gaps between current funding and need

Unknowns for Further Exploration

- **Defining Adequacy Targets:**
 - Fall subcommittee and Workgroup meetings will explore how to translate family-driven vision of services into funding targets
 - Collaboration needed with Workforce and Program Standards workstreams
- **Incorporating Non-State-Managed Funding Sources:**
 - Continue to consider local, family, and Head Start contributions in design
 - Better understand the extent of current non-state contributions
 - Must account for inequities in available resources across communities and avoid disincentivizing local investment



Discussion

- What impact would these recommendations have on providers and families?





Fall Subcommittees Update

Fall Subcommittee Overview and Objectives



- **Overview**: Subcommittees will focus on **pressure testing and providing feedback on assumptions that will inform the development of IDEC's funding framework** for child care/pre-k, home visiting across the mixed delivery system and provider types*
- **Objectives**: At the end of this round of subcommittees, we will have a deeper understanding of:
 - A recommended initial set of **family driven cost factors** to consider embedding in definitions of adequacy targets
 - Qualitative input on **known and unknown cost factors** to inform development of adequacy targets
 - Input on variations required based on the experiences and **needs of different provider types**
 - Questions needing **further consideration and research** to inform funding framework

**EI and ECSE work is ongoing internally*

Fall Funding Design Subcommittees Structure

All subcommittees will focus on priority populations, including **multilingual learners** and **children with disabilities and developmental delays**.

Child Care/Pre-K (Ages 0-5)

- Including licensed centers, homes, and school-based settings
- Topics may include:
 - What are the costs associated with family-driven vision of quality?
 - How does funding design impact providers in the mixed delivery system?
 - What are the considerations around funding structures to support family and community needs?

Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Providers

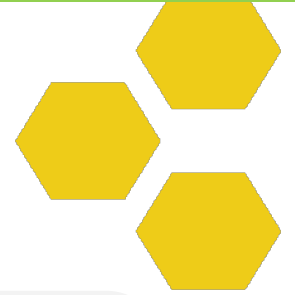
- Topics may include:
 - What are the unique needs of Family Friend Neighbor (FFN) providers?
 - How should funding design and the road map to full costs account for FFN providers' structure?

Home Visiting

- Topics may include:
 - What else should be considered to reflect families' priorities
 - What are the considerations around access of Home Visiting and impact on funding design?

Child Care/Pre-K Subcommittee Agenda Plan

*Discuss emerging recommendations with
Funding Design Workgroup & Family Service
Workgroups*



Meeting 1: October

- Welcome, introductions, and level setting
- Discuss definition of adequacy target and cost factors
- Discuss family input on desired services, with a focus on children with disabilities/developmental delays and multilingual learners
- Preview potential cost factors associated with families' desired services

Meeting 2: November

- Discuss costs associated with what families want and how those vary across settings (FCC, center-based, and school-based).
- Key Focus: Supporting children with disabilities and developmental delays; mental health in the classroom

Meeting 3: January

- Discuss costs associated with what families want and how those vary across settings (FCC, center-based, and school-based).
- Key Focus: Supporting Multilingual Learners; Nontraditional Hours Care
- Refine considerations and insights

Takeaways from Meeting 1: "Known" Cost Factors for Child Care/Pre-K – including staffing/workforce & program operations

What has changed since cost factors were previously identified?

- **Staffing:** Staff costs have continued to rise. There is often a need for more staffing to support the needs of children in the classroom. In addition, high turnover is costly.
- **Benefits:** Healthcare costs have increased significantly.
- **Operations:** Costs related to snow removal, facility insurance, facility maintenance (especially for playgrounds), have risen significantly.
- **Contracted Services:** Services such as Teaching Strategies Gold, Child Plus, and others have risen and are outside of providers' control.

Home Visiting Subcommittee Timeline

Discuss emerging recommendations with Funding Design Workgroup; collaboration with Family Service Workgroups



Meeting 1: October

- Discuss definition of funding targets and cost factors
- Begin to discuss costs associated with families' vision for home visiting

Meeting 2: November

- Continue to discuss costs factors, with focus on serving multilingual learners and start-up and expansion costs
- Begin to discuss Home Visiting access and funding implications
- Prepare to share takeaways with the full Funding Design Workgroup

Meeting 3: December

- Refine considerations based on funding design workgroup input

Initial home visiting subcommittee meetings focused on “unknown” and family driven cost factors, including serving multilingual families and home visiting start-up and expansion

Unknown Cost Factors

- Transportation costs should be more clearly defined and differentiated by regional needs.
- Costs of outreach and recruitment and professional development are often unaccounted.

Serving Multilingual Families

- Multilingual home visitors need lower caseloads to accommodate additional duties, such as attending appointment or translating materials.
- Funding should consider additional compensation for multilingual staff to support recruitment and retention.
- There are additional costs when new languages besides English and Spanish are introduced.

Program Start-Up & Expansion

- Start-up specific grants are needed to support the planning and development of new programs, which often need up to two years to reach full caseloads.



Workgroup Preview

Tomorrow's Funding Design Workgroup meeting will focus on funding design updates and emerging home visiting recommendations.

Goals

- Share updates on key activities underway for Funding Design and related work
- Provide feedback on cost factors identified by the Home Visiting Subcommittee

Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Updates:
 - Deep Dives
 - Head Start Cost Modeling
 - Communications
- Subcommittee Emerging Recommendations

Next Steps



Upcoming Meetings:

- **Head Start Focus Groups**

Wednesday, November 19 from 12-1:30 CT
or Thursday, November 20 from 2-3:30 CT
- **Next Funding Design Workgroup Meeting:**
November 19 at 5:00PM – Focus will be on
Home Visiting & overall funding design
updates
- **Next Child Care / Pre-K Subcommittee
Meeting:** January 13, 2026 at 1:00PM

Thank you!



Thank you!



Workforce Work Stream Update

IDEC Workforce Listening Sessions

Session Participation and Focus

- Five sessions held in Fall 2025
- ~730 total participants
- Feedback was gathered across three topic areas:
 1. Compensation;
 2. Preparation, Training, and Professional Development; and
 3. **Work Environments and Workforce Well-Being**

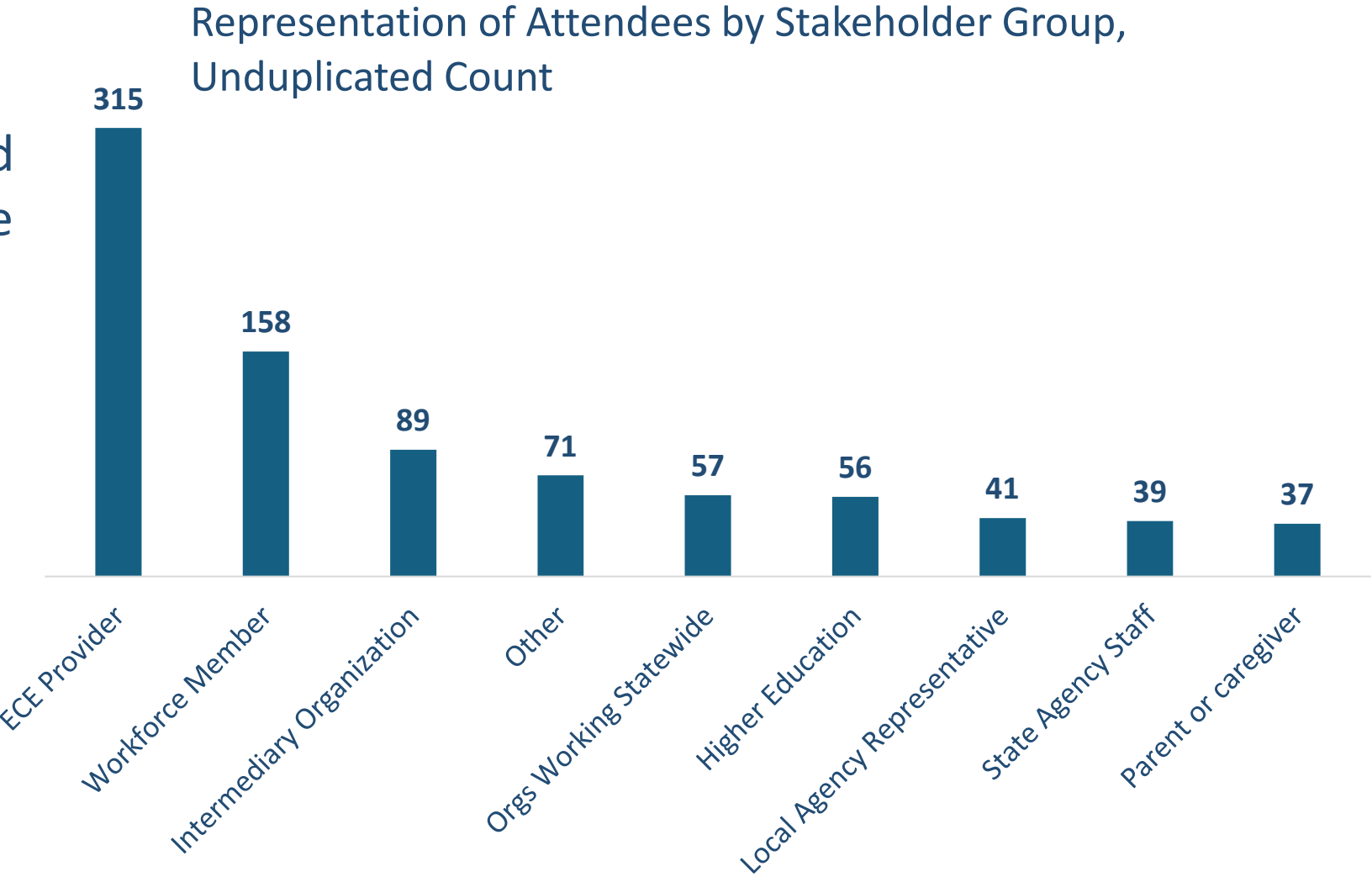
Session Goals:

- **Hear directly from frontline staff** working with children and families regularly (and others)
- **Share a summary** of the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC) **current preliminary understanding** of early childhood workforce challenges and successes
- **Gather reactions and additional feedback** from early childhood workforce members to inform the current understanding
- **Gather input** on the state's direction for strengthening the early childhood workforce

Diverse Representation Across Stakeholders

Most attendees identified as Providers or Workforce Members - 473

Though we also had a great turnout from other systems members and partners!

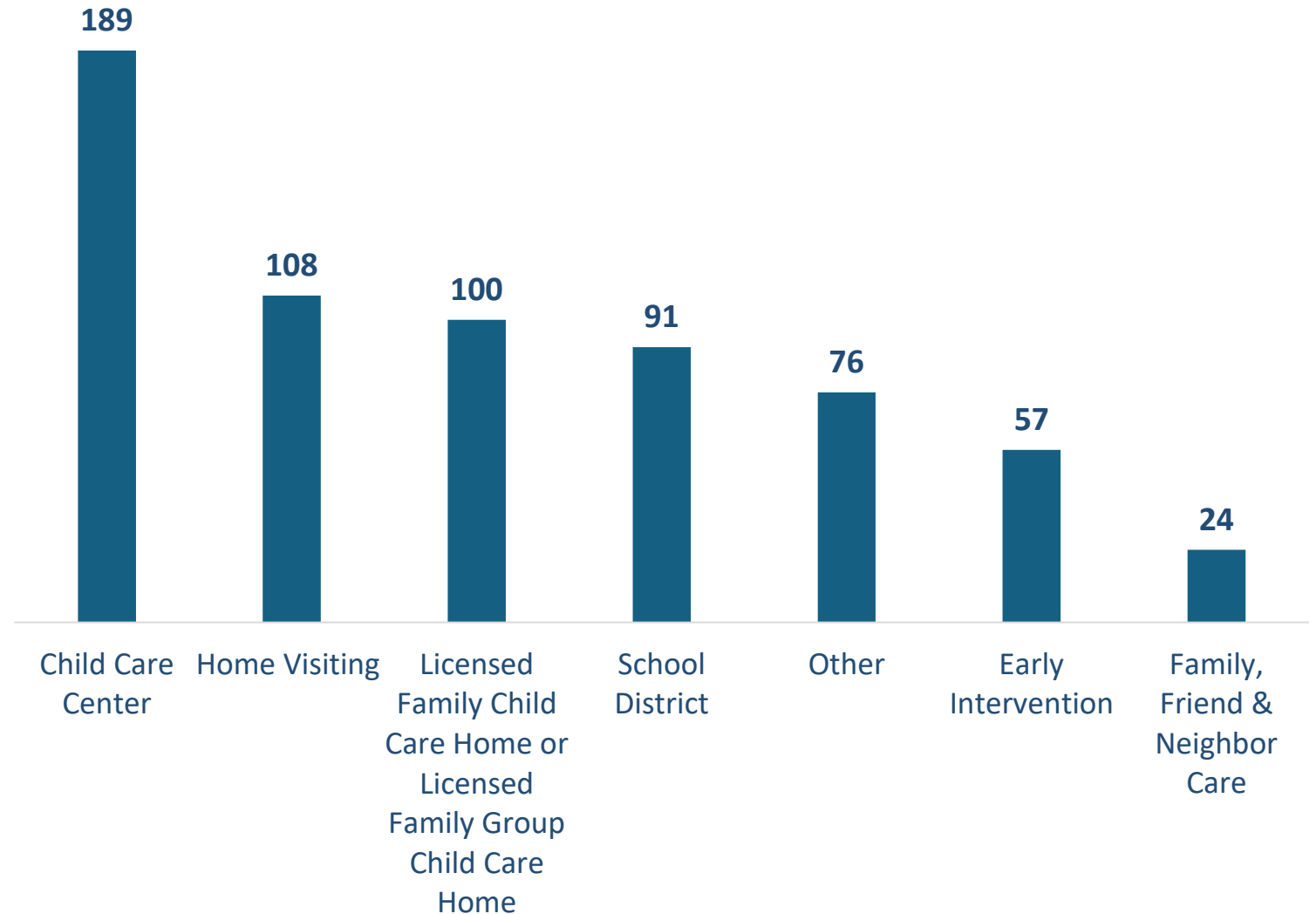


Diverse Representation Across Services/Settings

Many participants identified most closely with child care centers. (189)

We also had great turnout from:

- Home Visiting (108)
- Home Based Child Care/Group Care (100)
- School districts (91)
- Early Intervention (57)



Working environments can impact worker well-being and turnover

- As in most work settings, aspects of the work environment can support, or negatively impact, job-satisfaction and worker well-being.
- We know that **positive environments** tend to increase retention, well-being, productivity, and interactions.
- **Providers and others shared that challenging work environments** can lead to:
 - Stress, physical/mental/emotional drain, and burnout for the worker.
 - Turnover and workforce shortages across the industry.
 - Workforce members that are less productive and less effective in their work.

“All of the staff turnover. The pay and mental toll make it hard to keep teachers.”

– Child Care and Preschool Center

I agree that compensation is so important - salaries and benefits. But working environments mean a lot. I think we need to work on both.

- Listening Session Participant

Listening session participants reflected on what was shared and provided additional detail.



Participants validated information shared based on years of collected inputs, including:

- Qualitative feedback
 - State reports and surveys
 - Advisories and committees
 - Transition listening, surveys, and workgroups
 - National research and best practices
- We learned new and more detailed information than what was shared.

"I think the state agency has a pretty robust understanding of the barriers and opportunities. I do think the listening session(s) are quite helpful to pull out nuance."

- Listening Session Participant

Working Conditions and Workforce Well-Being (1/2)

Aspects of the work environment that support worker well-being



What we shared

Working environments can be **physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging**.

- Some staff report feeling **underprepared to support growing number of children with behavioral challenges**
- **Staffing shortages** can lead to those who remain feeling **overwhelmed**
- Workforce members often experience **second-hand trauma**
- Workforce members report that the **current environment** and context of federal immigration enforcement **adds to their stress and anxiety**
- **Administrative tasks take time and energy** away from serving and caring for children

“Compensation is a large piece of making these good and sustainable jobs, but also worker voice, input, and reducing stress that comes from working constantly understaffed/under-resourced is also important.”

- Advocate

Working Conditions and Workforce Well-Being (2/2)

Aspects of the work environment that support worker well-being



Across programs and settings, workforce members shared that they **do not have adequate:**

- **Paid planning and prep time**
- **Paid time off to rest** and take care of themselves and their families
- **Paid breaks** throughout the day to rest
- **Access to mental health supports** for themselves
- **Sufficient staff** to make the work manageable

More learning is needed on current challenges and needs related to retention, working conditions, and workforce well-being across sectors and roles.

Workforce members and stakeholders mention positive components of the work environment and their impact

- Some stakeholders reported that many **supportive supervisors and leaders** create a positive work culture, celebrate good work, and make hard days more manageable.
- Many shared that they have **supportive colleagues and peers** who support them through challenging situations with positive collaboration, communication and trust.
- For many workforce members and other stakeholders, their **passion for children, families and the work they do** is what drives them or keeps them in their role (sometimes despite the challenges)

"My colleagues are a tremendous support. Enjoy my chance to meet with them, share ideas and struggles."

– EI Provider

"Being with kids all day is honestly bucket-filling. And hilarious"

– Child Care Center Director

"The smiles of the kiddos always brighten my day. Also knowing that they and their families rely on me keeps me going."

Child Care Center Provider

Workforce members and stakeholders mention positive components of the work environment and their impact

- Early Intervention Providers and Home Visitors, and to some extent Family Child Care Providers, emphasized **flexibility to set their own hours/schedule** as a positive aspect of their job.
 - Some reported center directors experimenting with more flexible schedules to accommodate things like school or family needs
- Providers with access to coaching and supports, e.g., **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants**, report they help prepare them to address challenges and reduce stress.

“I enjoy the autonomy my organization provides in the day-to-day as it allows me to meet my families on their own schedule and be flexible with that.”

– Home Visitor

“We absolutely LOVE our Infant Mental Health Consultants. They have been game changing in getting our supervisors, Home Visitors, and Doulas to be grounded in the work of relationship building. They have assisted with addressing burnout and shifting us from reactionary thinking to proactively thinking. I have heard from multiple people that they would have quit if it wasn't for our IMHCs. They are amazing. Everyone should have them.”

- Home Visitor

Workforce members and stakeholders also report additional challenges, including lack of respect for the profession and their role.

While some reported feeling valued by supervisors, many mentioned **lack of recognition and respect**, including misperceptions among the general public, as well as program administrators, compliance monitors, and parents about the critical work providers do and the expertise they have.

“Lack of respect for the overall ECE field. Often thought that we are just visiting families and check-in or chatting with parents and/or babysitting. People do not realize the qualifications of ECE staff and the impact our work has on children.”

– Home Visitor

“Most of us are the janitors too. We come early or leave late. We bring our expertise and talents for very little compensation as already shared. Then we are called baby sitters or day care instead of recognized as the professional brain builders that we are.”

-- Child Care Center Provider

Attendees provided additional detail about insufficient capacity.

- **Lack of knowledge and skills needed** to do the job well, and no additional staff with expertise
- **Work expectations** that exceed capacity and resources
- **High caseloads**
- **Long hours**
- **Lack of time off** for personal or professional needs, due to no one to fill in and lack of flexibility around their schedules
- Family child care providers specifically mention a **lack of staff to support** the vast scope of duties from child care to paperwork.

"In a home atmosphere, we don't get breaks. We don't get time for lunch. We do all our paperwork ..on the nights or weekends. All paperwork has to be completed after my 12-hour day.

– Family Child Care Provider

"Our providers are stretched so thin and there are not enough hours in the day to meet all of their required duties. The direct service, billing, multiple meetings required, report requirements, travel requirements, etc. are so hard to meet and in all actuality are not being met. I've never had so many providers expressing how burnt out they are with trying to meet all of the needs."

– EI provider

Workforce members may experience poor physical conditions, environments, and lack of resources

- **Poor physical environments or resources**, including concerns with aging or outdated buildings and insufficient or outdated resources, equipment, and technology;
- **Physical conditions**, having to travel vast distances, sometimes to areas with high crime rates or to settings where they do not feel safe.

"We are always trying to find the cheapest locations but have flooding, landlord, safety issues."

- Administrator

"We don't feel like we have the tools to do our jobs."

- EI Provider

"Safety has been an issue for providers in serving families in an urban environment - and in areas where there are higher crime rates."

- Listening Session Attendee

Stakeholders report workforce members lack meaningful support structures.

Absence of sufficient support structures to help them do their job well or to mitigate job-related challenges lead to stressful experiences and interactions.

- Coaching, mentorship, and peer networking, particularly as staff move into new roles
- Opportunities for reflective practice with supervisors
- Meaningful and accessible professional development and technical assistance to help them be successful in the classroom

“(We) need mentoring for new providers. EI is a specialty area, working with infants and toddlers and families and often being “on your own” in a home or community setting.

It's different than in a clinic or school where you have other providers nearby. New grads can be successful in EI but need mentoring to feel confident and stay.”

- EI Provider

In Brief: Work Environments and Well-Being

Positive (and innovative) things are happening that create supportive, productive work environments that may increase job satisfaction.

- Leadership acknowledgement and celebration of staff
- Reflective supervision
- Colleague and peer support
- Fulfilling to work with children and families
- Flexibility and flexible work hours, for some
- Support from Infant Early Childhood Mental Health consultants and other

Challenges do exist that reportedly cause stress and may take a physical and emotional toll.

- Staff shortages, including insufficient capacity or expertise
- High expectations, expanding roles and administrative burden
- Poor physical conditions and lack of resources
- Insufficient time for breaks, planning or professional development time, or personal time off
- Absence of meaningful support structures (e.g., TA, mentors, experts, specialized supports).
- Lack of recognition and respect, not feeling valued



Discussion Questions

- What are we missing? What do we need to better understand?
- How should the state best support productive and positive work environments?
- Which of these factors should the state prioritize addressing?

Small groups in session. Meeting will resume momentarily.



Non-TAC public participants may:

- Join a breakout group to discuss the questions with others
- Respond to the discussion questions individually via padlets
- 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>
- Advocates:
https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/Nov_Workforce_Advocates
- Families/Familias:
https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/Nov_Workforce_Advocates
- Providers/Proveedores:
https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/Nov_Workforce_Providers_Proveedores
- Service Organizations:
https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/Nov_Workforce_ServiceOrgs
- State & Local Agencies:
https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/Nov_Workforce_StateLocalAgencies
- All Other Roles//Todos Los Roles:
https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/Nov_Workforce_AllRoles_TodosRoles

IDEC Next Steps

- Release full summary findings from listening session by the end of the calendar year
- Analysis of input from Higher Education Listening Sessions
- PDAC's Interim Shift Launched by End of Year
- Workforce Work Group - TBD



Looking Ahead

December In-Person TAC

- Tuesday, December 9th 10:00AM-3:00PM
- Normal Public Library (206 W College Ave, Normal, IL 61761)



Meeting Objectives:

- 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
- Licensing

Additional Transition Meetings



- **Funding Design Workgroup**
 - Wednesday, November 19, 4:30PM – 6:00PM
- **ELC Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Resources and Programs**
 - Thursday, November 20, 11:00AM-12:00PM
- **Supporting Multilingual Learners Workgroup**
 - Friday, November 21, 9:00AM – 10:00AM
- **Advisory Workgroup**
 - Monday, December 1, 4:00PM -- 5:30PM
- **ELC Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Resources and Programs**
 - Thursday, December 4, 11:00AM-12:00PM
- **ELC Executive Committee Meeting**
 - Monday, December 8, 5:30PM-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!



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