



Transition Advisory Committee

October 14, 2025
5:15 – 7:00 PM





Welcome and Introductions

Goals and Agenda

Today's Goals

- Build community amongst TAC members
- Provide updates on the transition
- Learn about and provide feedback on ChiByDesign's Service Blueprint and Birth to 3 Co-Design project
- Learn about and provide feedback on the Child Care Licensing Co-Design Sprint

Agenda –

- Welcome and introductions – 10 min
- IDEC updates – 15 min
 - Federal updates
 - New IDEC team members
 - Other
- ChiByDesign – 45 min
 - Service Blueprint
 - Birth to Three Codesign Sprint
- Redesign Update: Child Care Licensing Co-Design Sprint – 30 min
 - Presentation
 - Large Group Discussion
- 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



In the chat, please introduce yourself and respond to the following prompt:

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Family spotlight

“When he got diagnosed, I was handed a packet of info and basically told “figure it out,” so I had to figure it out. I got on the Internet, started calling people, and my husband and I found The Autism Place.”

- Parent, McLean County





IDEC Updates

Welcome new IDEC staff!

- **Chelsey Ament**, Private Secretary to Secretary Ramos
- **Aaron Beswick**, Director of Special Projects
- **Paige Greenwood**, Director of Family Engagement
- **Kelsie Kliner**, Project Director, Change Management
- **Patricia Rooney**, Chief Family and Community Systems Officer
- **Erin Von Holten**, Budget Director

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
- Paige Greenwood, Director of Family Engagement
- Kelsie Kliner, Project Director
- Christina Krasov, Chief Data Officer
- Matthew Lehman, Agency Procurement Officer
- Sally McDaniel-Smith, Human Resources Director
- 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

Federal Update

- Federal presence & escalation in immigration enforcement
- Federal Government Shut Down

Resources

- [IllinoisImmigrationInfo.org](https://www.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

Updating PDAC priorities for FY26

PDAC is an advisory body charged with advising IDHS on IL's professional development system and supports for the early childhood workforce, including Gateways for Opportunity.

- As IDEC engages in redesign work, PDAC is pivoting from its current workplan to support IDEC's priorities and work. This will be important to ensure alignment and avoid redundancies.
- New work may include:
 - Reviewing information from listening sessions and data on credential and training use
 - Mapping the current state of the Gateways Professional Development System, including credentials and training
 - Considering strategies to increase transparency and representation
 - Potentially engaging with the workforce and stakeholders to explore what is working well, rubs, pain points, and wonderings.

Next Steps:

- IDHS and IDEC, in consultation with INCCRRA and cochairs, are putting together an updated plan for FY2026; intend to reconvene PDAC before the end of the calendar year





ChiByDesign



**Civic
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alliance

Reimagining Child Care Licensing in IL



Contents

- **Project Background**
- **Vision for reimagining child care licensing**
- **Project plan**
 - **Discovery**
 - **Design & Draft**



Project Background

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**. This work is ongoing in addition to technology improvement efforts.

The disparate nature of agencies and programs means families must currently navigate a complex and inefficient system to access services.

IDEC leadership asked Civic Consulting Alliance to support 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.



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



The work was divided into three parts and rooted in deep engagement around root causes

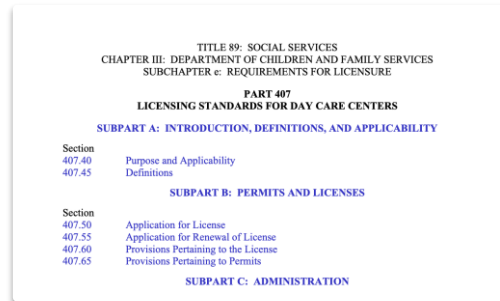
	Discovery <i>Understand current state</i>	Design <i>Gather feedback</i>	Draft <i>Organize recommendations</i>
Timing	May – July 2025	August – September 2025	September 2025
Activities	- Review inputs on current state of licensing as a starting point - Support and synthesize listening sessions - Identify top pain points and prioritize areas of focus	- Hold design workshops around identified focus areas and envision future state and steps to reach that vision - Explore whether potential solutions to improve licensing process are viable for prioritization	Compile viable inputs to form, prioritize, and put forth recommendations for licensing process improvement
Deliverables	✓ Synthesis of stakeholder feedback ✓ Fact pack ✓ Identified priorities for process improvement to move forward	✓ Prioritized list of potential solutions	✓ Draft list of recommendations, including ideas for further exploration

Discovery



Discovery

To understand the current state of child care licensing in Illinois, the team conducted research and engaged a robust set of stakeholders



Rules and legislation

- DLA Piper review of IL licensing requirements and exemptions
- Comparison with eight states that recently updated their programs

Exemptions data insights: approvals & denials

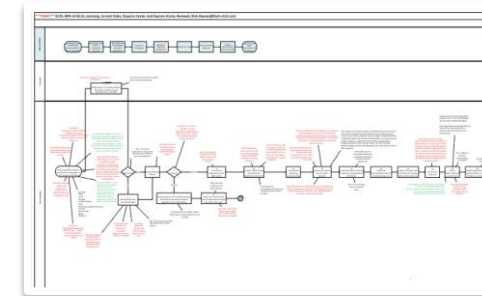
Approval	Count	Avg. case time (days)	Denial	Count	Avg. case time (days)
Y	438	16.27	N	237	18.06
N/Y	36	27.06	N/N	2	42
N/N/Y	14	91.07	N/N/N	1	29
N/N/N/Y	2	102	TOTAL	240	18.59
TOTAL	490	19.38			

75% of the 568 school age-only programs were granted exemptions, while only 39% of the 160 non-school age programs were granted exemptions.

Civic Consulting *we get big things done*
alliance **idec**

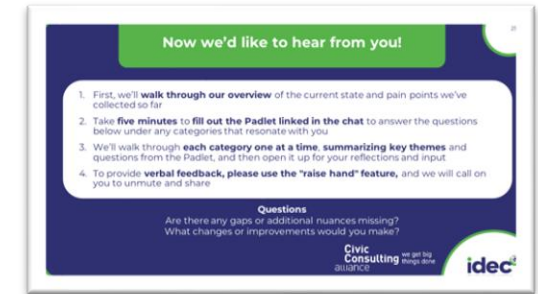
Data analysis

- Exemptions data (2023–2025)
- DCLR caseloads (April 2025)



Materials

- Process review: Maps, applications, and exemption requirements
- Communication review: Sunshine, INCCRRA, and local CCR&R sites



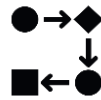
Listening sessions

- Providers
- Day Care Licensing Representatives (DCLRs)
- Other state agency staff
- Advocates
- Early/Head Start programs
- Community-based organizations
- Parents and families

See next slide for more detail

Listening sessions engaged over 540 attendees who shared feedback across five categories, leading to four areas to explore further

Process improvement



"The processes for license-exempt care are often confusing and inconsistent, and there is a need for a clear, streamlined process for understanding 'who to go to for what.'" – DeWitt County Provider

"Waiting 3-4 weeks for a background to clear is hard to even help providers get licensed quickly or to get the employees when they need them." – Daycare Licensing Representative

Communication and transparency



"Huge gap of who knows that there will be a new agency and who does not know. If someone is not connected with anyone or not in the Facebook groups, they are out of the loop." – Cook County Provider

Structures and support



"Providers can't get timely answers, renewals aren't getting completed on time. My DCFS rep has too much work to do." – Winnebago County Provider

Technology

"[We need] historical electronic files from last 3 years [to know] what providers had already supplied to licensing application and if there are no changes to their license." – Cook County State Agency Staff



Rules and legislation

"It would be nice if the rules had more guidance for us to point providers towards, so it is not left up for interpretation."

– Morgan County State Agency Staff



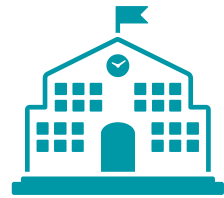
Processes related to **background checks** and **exemptions** emerged as the highest priorities for review

External communication, particularly with providers, was identified as most in need of improvement

DCLR structures and support were specifically identified as areas to address first

Being explored and addressed in parallel workstreams

The project team then moved forward looking for solutions to address the pain points identified in those four focus areas



Background checks

Pain points from stakeholders

- Delays and inefficiencies
- Tied to provider vs. individual

Exemptions

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

External communications

- Inconsistent updates shared with providers
- Communication breakdowns between providers and DCLRs
- Outdated websites

DCLR structures & support

- Inconsistent interpretation and application of rules
- Strenuous workloads

Design & Draft



Each design session centered on a vision for the focus area and brought together a range of stakeholders to share their perspectives

Vision for focus area

Design session attendees



Background checks

Prioritize the safety of children while enabling child care providers to be licensed and employ staff seamlessly in every community across the state of Illinois through a timely, reliable, and effective background check process

- IDEC Leadership
- DCFS (Leadership, Background Check Unit, DCLRs, Licensing Supervisors)
- DHS (CCAP)
- Child Care Providers/Advocates



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

- IDEC Leadership
- DCFS Leadership
- DHS (CCAP)
- DLA Piper



External communications

Provide clear information, responsive support, and accessible tools that keep providers informed on most recent updates to deliver quality and safe child care

- IDEC Leadership
- DCFS (Leadership, DCLRs, Licensing Supervisors, Administrative Staff)
- Child Care Providers



DCLR structures and support

Provide initial, ongoing, and issue-specific training and ensure clarity in roles and responsibilities in a way that provides consistency and effectiveness across all licensing representatives

- IDEC Leadership
- DCFS Leadership
- Licensing Supervisors
- DCLRs



Background check sessions focused on delays and inefficiencies, plus the role the State and providers play in the process

Key Questions

What changes based on the current system would improve timeliness and efficiency under IDEC?

Should the background checks process under IDEC be more centralized?

Key Takeaways

- 1) Digitization would solve issues and delays due to manual, paper-based processes and mail submissions
- 2) The benefits may outweigh the drawbacks to centralizing more aspects of the process, particularly linking fingerprints to individuals and having the State adjudicate waivable offenses, and the idea warrants further investigation

The following were identified as next steps for further exploration:

Explore **near-term recommendations** for DCFS:

1. Digitize a streamlined 718 form that cannot be submitted until complete
2. Increase education to providers around background check process

Explore **centralization** with IDEC transition:

1. Link fingerprints to individual applicants instead of providers
2. Have State adjudicate waivable offenses



Exemptions design sessions highlighted the need for an updated, nuanced framework based on oversight amid the IDEC transition

Key Questions

Which types of child care programs should be fully exempt from any form of licensure?

Which types of child care programs should have an alternative pathway for licensure (i.e., some requirements)?

Key Takeaways

- 1) There could be value in considering a new exemptions framework centered on levels of oversight (by IDEC or by another agency)
- 2) More work needs to be done to identify where different programming falls in this new framework and what the requirements are for each level of oversight

The following were identified as next steps for further exploration:

1. Complete mapping of types of programming to **continuum of oversight**
2. Understand capacity of other agencies for **non-IDEC oversight**
3. Define **requirements and options** for each category, including relationship to funding
4. Define **internal processes** for oversight



External communications design session focused on provider communications

Key Questions

What types of information are important for IDEC to communicate to providers?

How can IDEC implement or improve communication channels?

How can we address pain points by providing supports and tools to ensure consistent and professional customer service?

Key Takeaways

- 1) There are a number of categories of information IDEC should share with providers regularly, including compliance requirements, educational information, and real-time notifications about urgent health and safety updates
- 2) IDEC could also improve on communication channels such as digital resources, live info sessions, direct provider communications, and a centralized customer service hub

The following were identified as next steps for further exploration:

1. **Develop implementation plan**, including quick wins for near-term implementation and bigger initiatives for longer-term implementation



DCLR structures & support design sessions discussed roles and responsibilities, plus training and resources for DCLRs

Key Questions

How should IDEC support DCLRs to do their jobs effectively and consistently?

How should IDEC strengthen capacity for DCLRs?

Key Takeaways

- 1) Standardization across initial and ongoing trainings, along with sufficient resources for DCLRs, is needed to ensure representatives across Illinois provide consistent information
- 2) Limited staffing capacity can strain workloads and heighten challenges for DCLRs; ensuring adequate staffing and resources for DCLRs will be critical

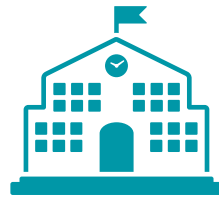
The following were identified as next steps for further exploration:

1. Coordinated **overhaul of current onboarding, training, and resources for DCLRs**
2. Address three main areas to alleviate DCLR workload: **ample staffing, tech improvements, and alternative customer service channels**

The work continues across these four focus areas



Background checks



Exemptions



External communications



DCLR
structures & support

Next steps

Civic Consulting Alliance and DLA Piper will continue 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

Discussion Questions

- What questions do you have?
- What resonates with you?
- What feedback do you have about the next steps presented for each focus area?





Looking Ahead

TAC Feedback Survey

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

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



Additional Opportunities to Engage



- **ELC Full Committee Meeting**
 - Monday, October 20, 5:30PM -- 7:30PM
- **FY27 Budget Listening Session**
 - Wednesday, October 4:30-5:30 PM.
- **ELC Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Resources and Programs**
 - Thursday, October 23, 11:00AM -- 12:00PM
- **Supporting Children with Disabilities and Developmental Delays Workgroup**
 - Tuesday, October 28, 12:00PM -- 1:00PM
- **Data, Analytics, and Insights (DAI) Workgroup**
 - Thursday, October 30, 1:00PM – 2:30PM
- **Supporting Multilingual Learners Workgroup**
 - Friday, October 31, 9:00AM – 10:00AM
- **Advisory Workgroup**
 - Monday, November 3, 4:00PM -- 5:30PM
- **Supporting Children with Disabilities and Developmental Delays Workgroup**
 - Tuesday, November 18, 12:00PM – 1:00PM

Funding Design Communications Outreach

Thanks to the great feedback from Funding Design Workgroup members and members of the public, IDEC is extending our communication outreach efforts.

From October - December, IDEC plans to engage a wide range of community partners to vet emerging subcommittee recommendations.



Scheduled meetings:

- ECRC Governance and Funding Workgroup meeting - October 20th
- We the Village Policy Meeting - October 30th
- Raising Illinois Home Visiting Policy Workgroup – October 30th
- Raising Illinois and Illinois Action for Children Infant/Toddler - November 5th
- EC Leadership Forum - Nov. 13th
- Southern Illinois Early Childhood Action Network - Nov. 13th
- It Takes a Village/Child Care Advocates United - Nov. 19th
- Alignment Rockford – Date TBD
- Aurora Education Commission – Date TBD

If there are existing meetings that you think IDEC should present at and listen to your membership's thoughts, please fill out this [form](#).

Next steps and close



- TAC members should reach out to Ann Whalen or Bela Moté with any feedback
- Optional TAC Program Standards & Alignment Session to provide feedback on draft scope of work
 - Wednesday, October 22nd, 4:00 -- 4:30PM
- Next TAC Meeting: Agenda includes funding design & workforce
 - Tuesday, November 18, 5:30PM – 7:00PM
- In person December TAC meeting – tentatively to be held Dec 9th, or 10th
- Next Listening Session:
 - Friday, November 21, 12:00PM – 1:00PM

Thank you!



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