



Transition Advisory Committee

February 24, 2026
5:30 – 7:00 PM



Accessing Interpretation



How to access interpretation:

1. Click on the globe icon labeled "Interpretation" at the bottom of your Webex window.
2. Select your preferred language from the list.
3. If you only want to hear the interpreter, you can also click "Mute Original Audio."

Cómo acceder a la interpretación:

1. Haga clic en el ícono del globo etiquetado como "Interpretación" en la parte inferior de su ventana de Webex.
2. Seleccione su idioma preferido de la lista.
3. Si solo desea escuchar al intérprete, también puede hacer clic en "Silenciar audio original."



Welcome and Introductions

Goals and Agenda

Today's Goals

- Build community amongst TAC members
- Provide IDEC updates (legislative, budget, federal and workstreams)
- Learn about and provide feedback Data Analytics and Insights Workgroup progress
- Reflect on next steps for Year 3 recommendations



Agenda

- **Welcome and introductions – 10 min**
- **IDEC updates – 20 min**
 - New IDEC team members
 - Legislative Bills
 - FY27 Budget Updates
 - Federal updates
 - Draft Family Engagement Framework Preview
- **Data, Analytics and Insights – 45 min**
 - Presentation & small group discussion
- **Looking Ahead & Next Steps– 15 min**
 - TAC Survey Recap
 - Review Year 3 Timeline

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 Kristen Garcia 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 Padlet's 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.

Family spotlight

- "When I wrote letter [for my child] to get into the preschool he got into last year. I advocated to get him an IEP. I wanted him to be placed at a certain preschool. I wrote a letter and signed it. "NAME REDACTED's Mommy Advocate" so that was my most successful effort because he was able to get in. It could've been from any other thing, but I think it was from the letter I wrote."

- Parent, Cook County





IDEC Updates

Welcome New IDEC Staff!

- Dr. Teresa Ramos, Secretary
- Chelsey Ament, Private Secretary
- **Christina Baker, Chief Internal Auditor**
- 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
- **Tyson Corley, Property & Records Manager**
- Katerina Dawson, Hiring Specialist
- **Jacob Diliberto, Facilities and Fleet Manager**
- Mackenzie Eisen, Project Director
- Sydney Ellison, Chief Operating Officer
- **James Fox, Director of Business Services**
- Julie Gilling, Director of Policy
- Paige Greenwood, Director of Family Engagement
- Arlene Herron, Human Resources Director
- Kelsie Kliner, Project Director
- Christina Krasov, Chief Data Officer
- Melissa Long, Hiring Specialist
- Jessica Morris, Chief Information Officer (DoIT)
- John R. Nuss, Hiring & Classifications Manager
- **Rachel Oppenheimer, Project Director – Strategic Plan**
- Maya Portillo, Project Director – Funding Design
- Gerson Ramirez, Director of Legislative Affairs
- Patricia Rooney, Chief Family and Community Systems Officer
- KC Stralka, Assistant Secretary of Project Management & Operational Excellence
- Ravinder Sahota, Deputy General Counsel for Leg/Policy
- Ethan States, Payroll Specialist
- Shannon Tesio, Director of Fiscal Services
- Marilyn Vazquez, Director of Communication
- Erin Von Holten, Budget Director
- Ann Whalen, Assistant Secretary of Education & Care Services
- Brandon Woudenberg, Deputy General Counsel

IDEC Legislative Bills Updates

SB2984 (Sen Collins) /HB5204 (Rep Mason)

- Makes IDEC the Co-Chair and the agency responsible to staff the Early Learning Council and explicitly adds parents/caregivers of children 5 and under to the Council. Additionally, amends the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Act. Provides that IDEC shall appoint specified members to the advisory committee.

SB3641 (Sen Morrison)/HB5099 (Rep Mason)

- Clarifies in statute, that IDEC is the lead agency responsible to administer child care background checks.

SB3907 (Sen Morrison)/HB5373 (Rep Mason)

- Makes changes in three major areas: child care background checks, exemptions and general clean-up.

**Preparing to call the bills for a vote in Committee*

The Governor's Proposed FY27 budget includes nearly \$4.5B in Early Childhood investments

Investing in What Matters: Early Childhood Development



SMART START ILLINOIS: Investing in Early Childhood

Governor's Proposed FY27 Budget for Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC): \$4.424 billion All Funds, \$2.088 billion General Funds

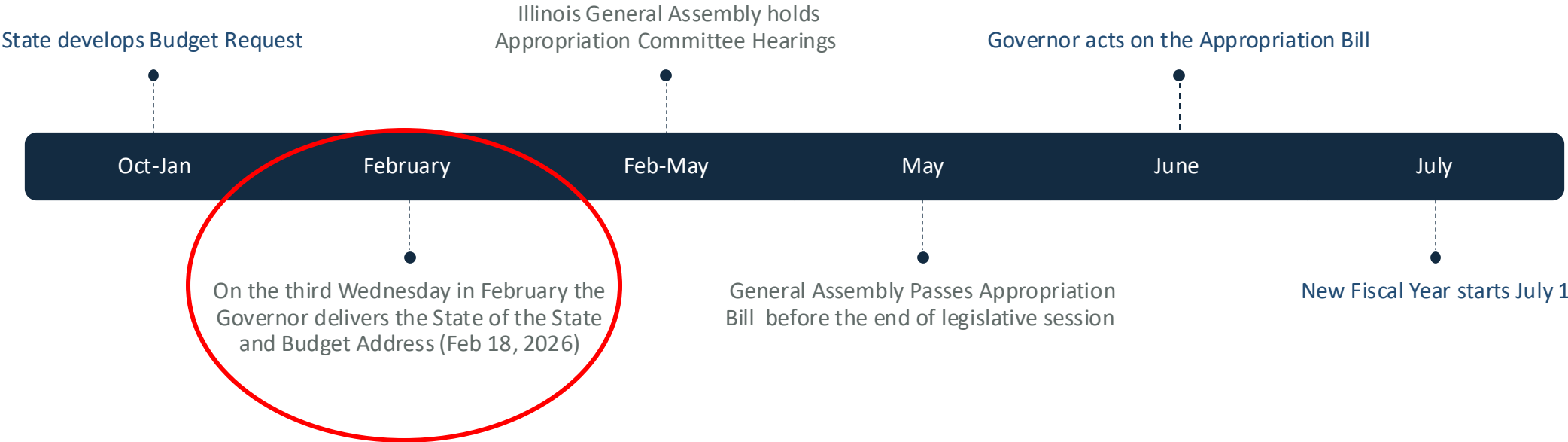
- Includes the first year of full operational and programmatic funding for IDEC.
- **\$748 million** to maintain investment in the Early Childhood Block Grant funding.
 - Maintains the funding level that has supported the addition of over 11,000 new seats added since 2023.
- **\$200 million** investment for Early Childhood Workforce Compensation Grants.
- Other Early Childhood Investments include:
 - **\$55 million** in additional investment for increased participation in the Child Care Assistance Program, up to 155,000 children.
 - **\$2.3 million** to continue implementation and expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
 - Today, more than 97,000 children under the age of five are receiving free books in the mail every month, a 59 percent increase since February 2025.
 - **\$15 million** increase for Early Intervention programs to support timely services for families.
- IDEC funding consolidates nearly \$2 billion in FY26 General Funds appropriations for early childhood programs such as the Child Care Assistance, Early Intervention, Home Visiting, and Maternal and Child Health programs, as well as DCFS day care licensing and the ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant.



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Coverage Across Illinois



Updates on the Budget Process



Federal Child Care Funding Freeze

- On 1/6, the Trump Administration announced their decision to freeze \$10 billion in federal funds for five Democratic-led states, temporarily halting IL's ability to draw down more than \$1 billion in social service funding for Illinois, including funds that support IL's CCAP program.
- On 1/9, the U.S. District Court for Southern District of New York issued a [temporary restraining order](#).
- On 1/23, the temporary restraining order was extended by 14 days.
- **On 2/6, a [preliminary injunction](#) was granted to stop the freeze of CCAP funds**
- **As of today, providers and families should continue to operate as usual.**



January 8, 2026

Dear Valued Partner,

On Tuesday, January 6, the Trump Administration announced their decision to freeze \$10 billion in federal funds for five Democratic-led states. Late Tuesday evening, the administration notified Illinois that this includes temporarily halting the State's ability to draw down more than \$1 billion in social service funding for Illinois. This includes over \$900 million in combined annual support from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG), which provide most of the funding for Illinois' Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

The news of this funding freeze is creating needless and harmful confusion. The State has been monitoring the situation carefully and exploring all available options to protect our state's employers, workforce, and the families who count on all of us to keep CCAP strong.

Despite this cruel attack on children and families, **as of January 7, 2026, we do not anticipate that funding will be impacted immediately.** We recognize that the Trump Administration's freeze has already imposed tremendous uncertainty on organizations, and it will have immediate effects on efforts to plan for the future, including planning future staffing and program operations.

We urge you to use your voices to advocate against the Trump Administration's actions, which not only destabilizes Illinois' child care ecosystem, but has a devastating impact on jobs and the economy.

We realize there are many unanswered questions about this alarming federal action against the people of our state and we will provide more updates as soon as they are available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Lesley Schwartz'.

Lesley Schwartz
Director, IDHS Division of Early Childhood



Draft Family Engagement Guiding Principles



1

Center parents voice by respecting and honoring their lived experience and expertise in early childhood.

2

Staff and facilitators are trained in equity and cultural competency principles to engage with parents across Illinois to build stronger relationships and establish mutual trust.

3

Embed parents into programmatic leadership and governance processes to ensure they are at decision making tables

4

Resources and communication modalities are family friendly, use strength-based language, and are accessible in multiple languages to engage families across Illinois.

5

Implement equitable strategies for continuous quality improvement to center family voice and improve feedback loops.

6

Design programs and cultivate community partnerships that are informed by the needs of children and families.

7

Provide compensation for parents' participation, feedback, and contribution to workstreams and beyond as available.

Join us for our first presentation on March 2nd from 4-5:30 PM with the Advisory Workgroup!



Data, Analytics and Insights (DAI) Priority Metrics Recommendations Memo

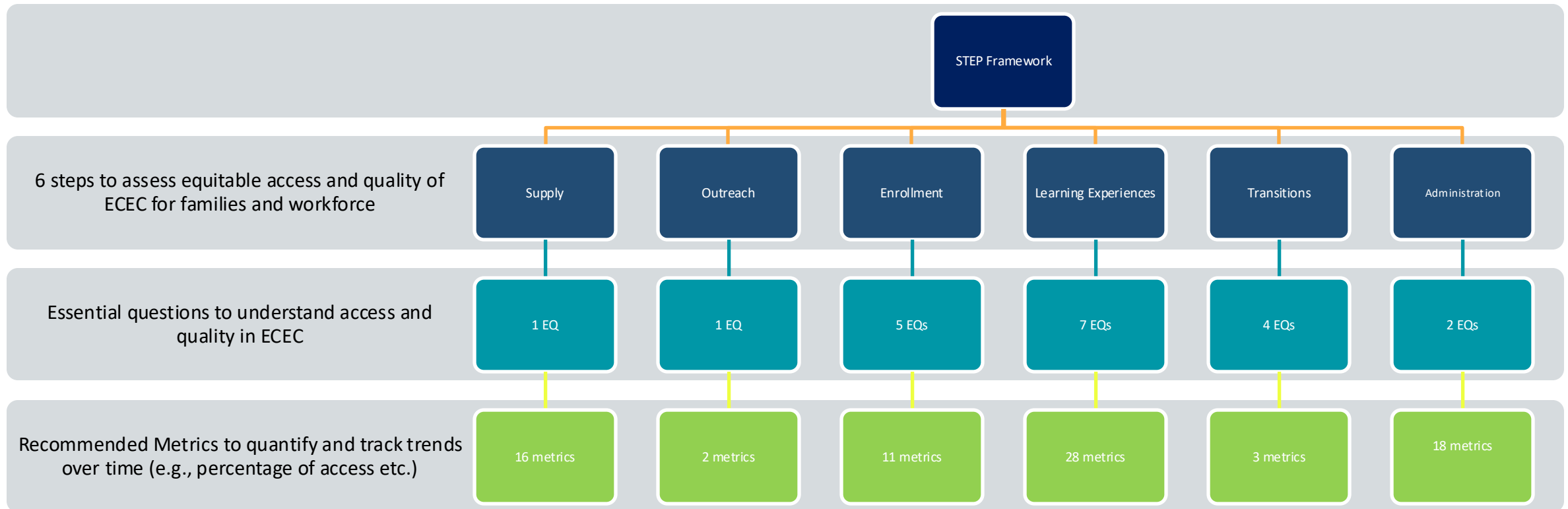
DAI Workgroup's Phase I Deliverable

By December 2025, the DAI workgroup will provide recommendations on key data metrics and outcomes IDEC must prioritize for Day 1 Readiness (July 2026).

Priority metrics will enable IDEC to understand:

- ✓ Families and providers' experience with Illinois' early childhood system
- ✓ Current gaps and inequities to accessing high-quality ECE programs
- ✓ Opportunities to enhance data systems and application processes

Overview of the STEP Framework



We know we've achieved success when...

Shared vision for priority metrics



Agreed upon set of essential questions, intended outcomes, and recommended metrics aligned with stakeholder needs

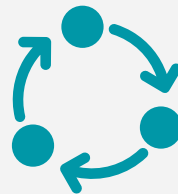
Stakeholder perspectives are integrated



Input from communities, transition workgroups, and the TAC has been collected, analyzed, and intentionally incorporated into recommendations

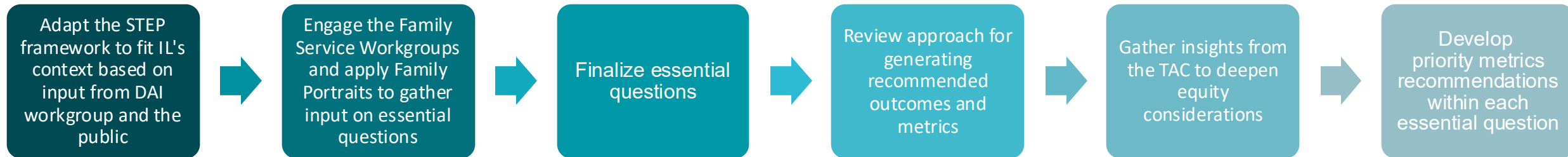
Recommendations reflect family and provider perspectives

Equity is embedded throughout



The TAC Equity Framework and DAI key principles are operationalized to guide discussions, prioritization, and final recommendations.

Phase I Deliverables on Priority Metrics Includes Input from the Family Service Workgroups and Transition Advisory Committee (TAC)



Six Recommended Essential Questions from the STEP Framework

The DAI Workgroup recommends that IDEC prioritize the following six essential questions by July 2026, to better understand how children and families experience access and quality within Illinois' early childhood system.

EQ1. Supply: Does the existing supply meet the needs of families from priority populations?

EQ9. Learning experience: Do workforce members receive training in supporting the needs of children from priority populations and families?

EQ11. Learning experiences: Do children from priority populations have access to the developmental supports they need?

EQ16. Transitions: Are children from priority populations reaching developmental milestones when transitioning to kindergarten?

EQ18. Administration: Are there funding mechanisms to support equitable experiences for children and families?

EQ19. Administration: Is there system-level guidance for how to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?

Recommended Priority Metrics were Evaluated Using an Equity Reflection Tool

Equity Dimension	Guiding Question
1. Understanding Disparities	Does this data help us understand or address disparities in access, experience, or outcomes? If not, what additional data would help us achieve this understanding?
2. Community Perspective	Does the data reflect what families, providers, and communities value or have named as important? If not, what additional data or modifications should be made?
3. Potential for Action	Can this data meaningfully inform decisions, policies, or resource allocation to address inequities? If not, what additional or modifications should be made?
4. Burden & Harm	Does the data reinforce deficit-based narratives or place undue burden on families/providers to prove inequity? Does collecting the data potentially create harm for families and providers? If so, what modifications should be made?
5. Disaggregation & Visibility (* under IDEC's purview)	<i>Can the data be disaggregated to show variation across race, income, language, ability, geography, etc.?</i>

Developed in accordance with the TAC Equity Framework and DAI key principles.



Sample Priority Metric Recommendation: Learning Experiences

Essential Question 9.

Do workforce members receive training in supporting the needs of children from priority populations and families?

Justification:

Illinois' Early Childhood system builds in and fully supports continued professional development for workforce members that is culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and trauma informed and tailored to the needs of children from priority populations and families.

Learning Experiences

Essential Question 9. Do workforce members receive training in supporting the needs of children and families from priority populations?

Original Child Trends Recommended Metrics	Understanding the question and metrics ensures that...
Metric 1. Percentage of workforce members who receive training in culturally responsive instruction, especially to understand a child’s developmental progress to inform instruction.	Illinois' Early Childhood system builds in and fully supports continued professional development for workforce members that is culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed and tailored to the needs of children from priority populations and families
Metric 2. Percentage of workforce members who receive training on trauma-informed care or responsiveness.	
Metric 3. Percentage of workforce members who receive training on reducing or eliminating bias in their work	

Final Recommended Metrics: **Essential Question 9. Learning Experience**

Essential Question 9. Learning experience: Do workforce members receive training in supporting the needs of children from priority populations and families?

**Training includes professional development delivered through multiple modalities such as coaching, technical assistance, peer learning, and formal training sessions.*

1. Revised Metric 1: Percentage of workforce members who receive training in developmentally supportive, strengths-based, and culturally responsive instructional practices that help them understand and support a child's developmental progress.*

1a – 1g. Additional Proposed Metrics:

1a. Percentage of workforce members who demonstrate application of developmentally supportive, trauma-responsive, and bias-reducing practices in daily work (as evidenced through observation, family feedback, coaching notes, or reflective practice tools).

1b. Percentage of supervisors, directors, or providers reporting observable improvement in practice following participation in training or coaching.

1c. Training participation and demonstrated application rates disaggregated by workforce type (teacher, home visitor, administrator), program type (child care, PFA, HS/EHS, HV), and region.

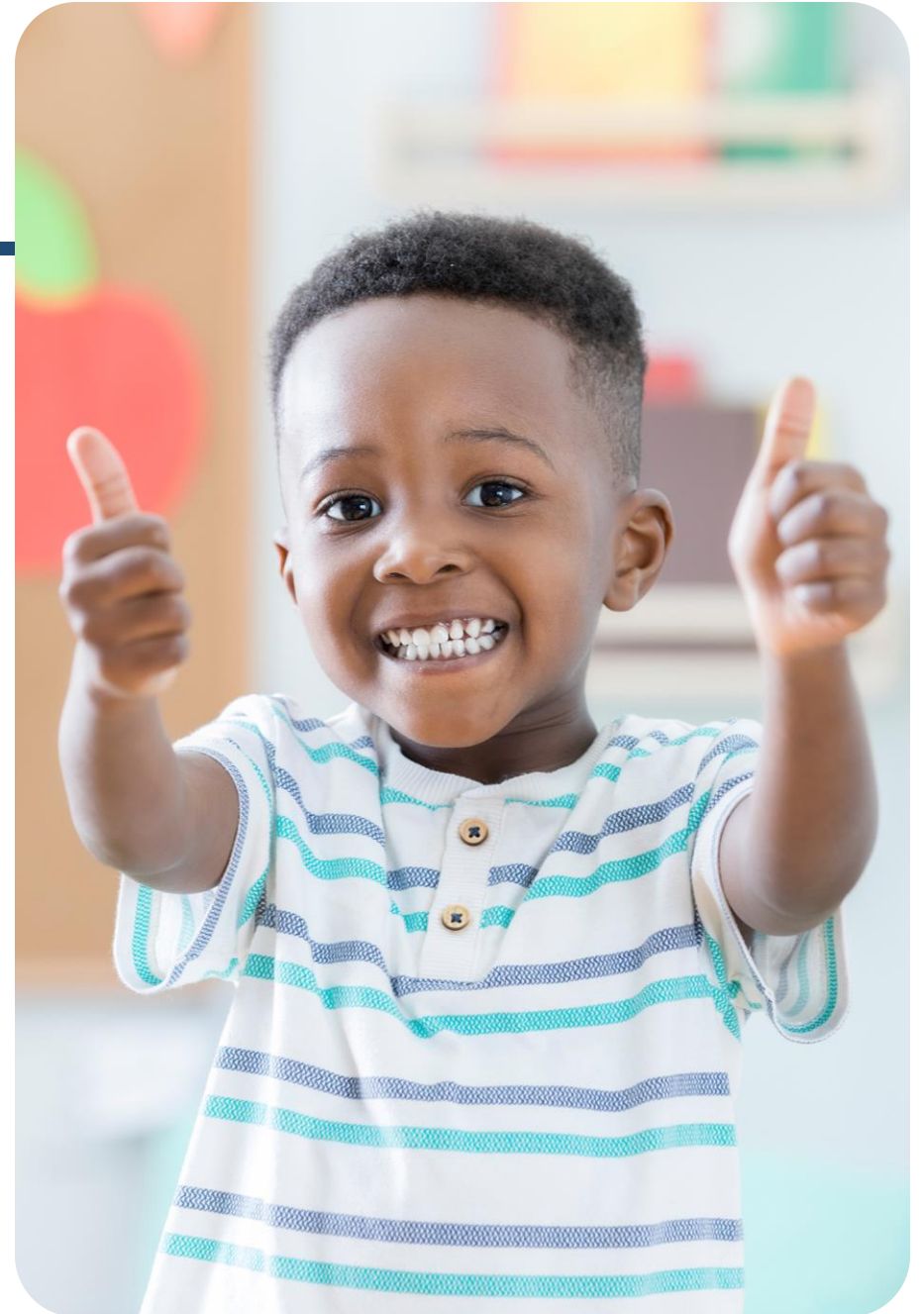
1d. Training access and completion rates disaggregated by race/ethnicity, home language, and geographic setting (urban, suburban, rural).

1e. Percentage of workforce members receiving professional development through multiple modalities, including coaching, TA, peer learning, and formal training.

1f. Distribution of training hours by modality and topic area (e.g., developmentally supportive practice, trauma-responsive approaches, bias-reducing strategies).

Phase I recommendations include 70 equity-centered priority metrics across six essential questions

Feedback from the DAI workgroup informed **revisions to 36 priority metrics** and an **additional 34 priority metrics** to ensure a comprehensive and equity-centered set of data points **across six essential questions**.



Applying an Equity Lens to Data Collection

- Comprehensive, disaggregated data collection is essential to understand experiences, reveal disparities, and advance equity for all children, families, and providers
- Data collection practices must minimize burden and barriers to ensure equitable and authentic family participation
- Standardized data collection processes to ensure accuracy, comparability, and equitable understanding across programs and settings
- Transparent communication and informed consent empower families to participate in data collection with trust and understanding

“What are we doing with the data we’re collecting?... We base a lot of decisions on the data that’s coming in, much of which can be subjective. We need to ask: How is this data collected? What is the purpose of collecting this? How to connect this to making meaning and outcomes for children and decisions for how to better support the workforce?”
- DAI workgroup member

Applying an Equity Lens to Data Interpretation

- Data must be interpreted within the social, cultural, and systemic contexts that shape families' experiences to ensure insights are valid, equitable, and meaningful
- Interpreting data through an equity lens requires confronting and eliminating bias to produce fair and trustworthy insights
- Integrating diverse stakeholder voices in data interpretation ensures cultural validity, fairness, and shared accountability

“As we talk about transitioning students to kindergarten, this needs to be done within the first 45 days... They are evaluating children on academics, but we are doing it on milestones. There's a gap and bias when it comes to that... We are looking at two "different levels of how we say children are prepared. Looking at a child's abilities versus their outputs. We need a tool that measures both.”

- DAI workgroup member

Applying an Equity Lens to Data Use and Feedback Loop

- Transparency turns data into a shared tool for learning, coordination, and equitable support for families and providers across programs and transitions
- Integrating data across inter-agency departments to reveal unmet needs, strengthen coordination, and reduce duplication
- When data-based decisions and lessons learned are transparent and accessible, data drives equitable action and strengthens support for families and providers

"Having an understanding about the level of training and where additional supports/resources should be allocated seems important at the system level for funding approaches. If this is disaggregated by region or program type, that could help the system have a better understanding of where additional training may be needed. This will help the state understand where additional resources may be needed and drive additional opportunities for training."

- DAI Workgroup member



Discussion Questions

- What safeguards or guardrails are most important to ensure data is interpreted fairly and without bias?
- What would support families and providers to feel comfortable and trust how their data is being collected and used? What might undermine that trust?
- What additional equity considerations should IDEC keep in mind when it comes to data collection, interpretation, and use?

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/DAI Presentation Advocates](https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI%20Presentation%20Advocates)

Providers:

- [https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI Presentation Providers Proveedores](https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI%20Presentation%20Providers%20Proveedores)

Families:

- [https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI Presentation Families Familias](https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI%20Presentation%20Families%20Familias)

Service Organizations:

- [https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI Presentation ServiceOrgs](https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI%20Presentation%20ServiceOrgs)

State and Local Agencies:

- [https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI Presentation StateLocalAgencies](https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI%20Presentation%20StateLocalAgencies)

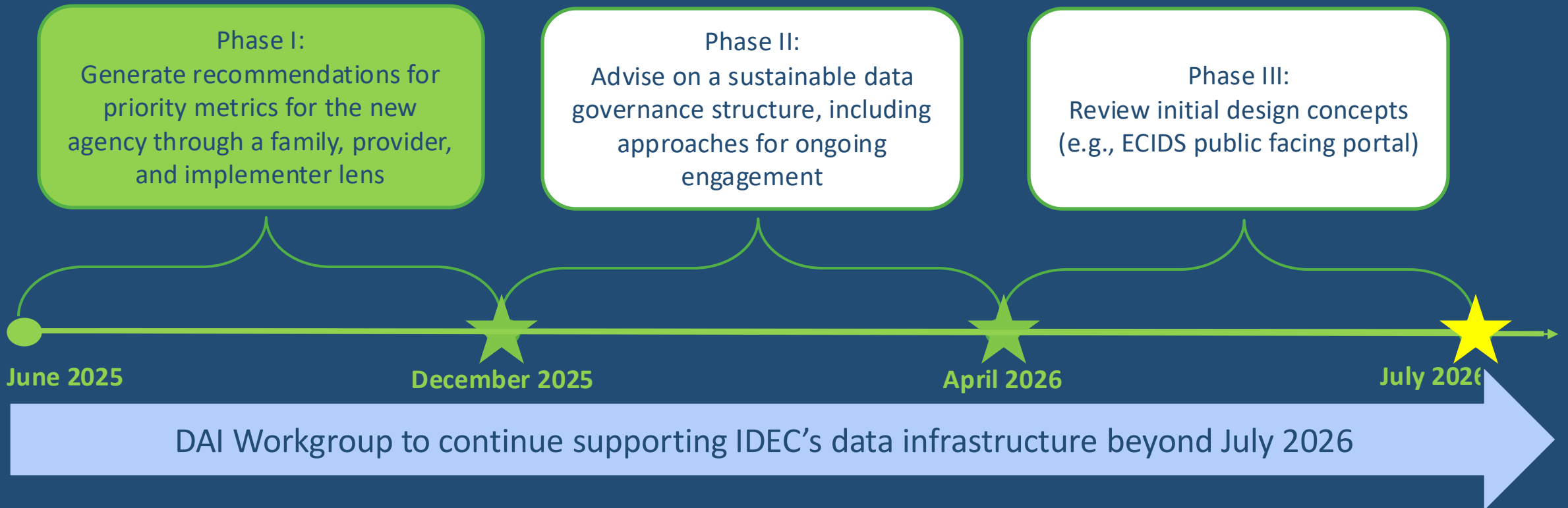
All other roles:

- [https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI Presentation AllRoles](https://padlet.com/kristengarcia4/DAI%20Presentation%20AllRoles)



DAI Workgroup Timeline Through July 2026

Monthly DAI Workgroup Meetings will focus on three overarching phases





Looking Ahead

January TAC Member Survey Recap

Extended Meeting Times

- 100% of responders are flexible with extending meeting times to 2 hours as needed.
 - There was variability in responses about the time of day, with 80% of respondent suggesting flexibility in the morning.

"TAC already does a good job of advance material review"
- TAC member

What topics should be covered in 2026?

- Process mapping and milestone deliverables
- Funding
- Licensing/exemptions
- IL Governance Structure
- ChiByDesign IL findings
- New IDEC guidelines
- Intermediary alignment

"I have already noticed changes to how meetings function based on feedback that has been offered, thank you – I feel heard."
- TAC member

Next Steps on Year 3 Recommendations

- The March 18th TAC Meeting will be focused on grounding and framing the final report.
 - The draft outline will be shared in advance to TAC Members for feedback.
- TAC will determine the cadence of upcoming meetings based on the feedback shared on the January TAC Member Survey.



Additional Transition Workgroup Meetings



- **Workgroup Meetings**
 - Funding Design Workgroup, Wednesday, February 25, 4:30-6:00 pm
 - Data, Analytics, and Insight Workgroup, Thursday, February 26, 1:00-2:30 pm
 - Program Standards and Alignment Workgroup, Thursday, February 26, 4:30-6:00 pm
 - Advisory Workgroup, Monday, March 2, 4:00-5:30 pm
 - Supporting Multilingual Learners, Tuesday March 3, 1:00-2:30 pm
 - Supporting Children with Disabilities and Developmental Delays, Tuesday, March 10, 1:00-2:30 pm
 - Data, Analytics and Insights Workgroup, Thursday, March 26, 1:00-2:30 pm
 - Program Standards and Alignment Workgroup. Thursday, March 26, 4:30-6:00 pm
 - Advisory Workgroup, Monday, March 30, 4:00-5:30 pm
- **Early Learning Council**
 - ELC Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Resources and Programs, Thursday, February 26th, 11-12pm
 - ELC Health and Home Visiting, Monday, March 16, 1:30-3:00 pm
- **Website**
 - Explore the Early Childhood Transition website for updates and meeting summaries: <https://idec.illinois.gov/>
- **Workgroup Meetings**
 - Lean more about attending workgroups: <https://idec.illinois.gov/idec-education-care-transition-planning/engagement-opportunities-and-listening-sessions.html>

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 and survey reminder.
- TAC members should reach out to Trish Rooney or Bela Moté with any feedback
- Next TAC Meeting:
 - Wednesday, March 18, 5:30-7:00 pm

Thank you!



 @idec_illinois

 @IllinoisDepartmentofEarlyChildhood

 @Illinois Department of Early Childhood

