



Greetings from the Illinois Department of Early Childhood,

We are excited to share that in a matter of weeks the [Illinois Department of Early Childhood](#) (IDEC) will bring together early childhood programs and services under one roof. This is a major milestone toward improving early childhood services in Illinois! Since the launch of the transition in November of 2023, the State and our partners have been engaging families and listening to providers.

Thank you for helping us get here!

Please continue to cheer on this work from across the state! *We appreciate you!* It's important for us to relay what we've learned throughout this process and to ensure the transition to IDEC remains seamless with little to no disruption for families and providers. Ahead of July 1, we'd like to share what will be different, what will remain the same and what our hope is for the future of early childhood in Illinois.

What will remain the same:

- Our newly consolidated team of early childhood staff will still continue to support early childhood programs and services in Illinois.
- Families will continue to access services and supports in the same manner they do now; there are no immediate technology or service delivery shifts for families.
- This year's grants will be continued in FY27, so programs, services, and payment schedules will remain steady.
- Unless otherwise informed, providers will continue to work with the same program staff and points of contact.
- Regular meetings and updates to the public and of our advisory structures.
- Regular updates from the agency through our newsletter, social media, updated website and public meetings.

What will be different on July 1:

- One place to go for early childhood services. All early childhood agency staff will be under "one roof."
- Early childhood programs and services will have a strong foundation of operational excellence from which to build over the next several years;
 - Stronger data practices and processes
 - Defined family engagement structure
 - New and growing family engagement team to support system navigation
 - Clear ownership of agency and program functions and mandates

- Early childhood grantees will use one [unified grants management system, Euna](#), managed by IDEC.
- Customer service will be enhanced for questions about services.
- Website will contain information on programs and services from each of the transferring agencies.
- IDEC will officially be the lead agency for the Child Care Assistance Program, Early Intervention Program, Home Visiting Programs, and the Early Childhood Block Grant programs.

What the next phase of the transition will look like:

- Modernizing our operational processes, moving away from paper and pencil-based systems.
 - Small groups of parents, providers, educators, and state staff will begin or continue to test new modernizations and automation of systems with the goal of working through any issues ahead of a statewide roll out.
- Reviewing and documenting current practices for early childhood programs in order to best understand how to bring efficiency and equity
 - IDEC will continue with our Transition Ad Hoc workgroups to lift the current state of early childhood programs and develop recommendations.
- IDEC will have reoccurring biweekly Transition Update Meetings to share redesign efforts and collect feedback from system partners.
- IDEC will continue to work on an unduplicated count of children in programs and services to bring transparency to families, providers and stakeholders so that we can make data-informed choices about future programs and opportunities.
- After approval from the FBI, creating a background check unit and streamlining the background check process.

We look forward to working with you all as early childhood programs transition to IDEC!

You can reach out and ask any questions to IDEC at Questions.IDEC@illinois.gov. To stay connected with our work, please [sign up for our monthly newsletter](#) where updates are shared on our seamless transition, technology rollouts and more!

Thank you,



Teresa Ramos, Secretary
Illinois Department of Early Childhood