



Greetings from the Illinois Department of Early Childhood,

We are excited to share that in just a few short days the [Illinois Department of Early Childhood](#) (IDEC) will bring together early childhood programs and services under one roof. This is a major step toward improving early childhood services and programs for children and families in Illinois!

We've been listening to you and your trusted partners in every county in Illinois through [listening sessions](#), [workgroups](#), and more! We've heard from you, the families we serve, who desire more coordination of community supports, simpler system navigation for eligibility and application processes, more collaboration and partnership and equitable and inclusive communication integrated into early childhood programs and services. Thank you for giving us feedback ahead of our launch! Although changes will be gradual, IDEC is committed to ongoing redesign and listening to families to address barriers with early childhood programs and services. You are at the heart of our work, and we want to honor your voice in decision-making.

If you have questions and are not sure where to turn for answers, IDEC is here to help. Start by contacting our Customer Service team by emailing Questions.IDEC@illinois.gov, they will make sure you are connected to the right people and agencies in your community. It's important that the transition of services remains seamless with little to no disruption for you. If you have questions, or hit a roadblock, we want to know. We are here to be accountable for clearing the road of debris or potholes and building bridges.

That said, we want to share what will be different on day 1, what will remain the same, and what our hope is for the future of early childhood in Illinois.

What will remain the same:

- Families will continue to access services and supports in the same manner they do now.
 - There will be no changes to eligibility criteria or services as a result of the transition to IDEC.
 - Families will not experience any changes with the regional infrastructure, including supports from their CCR&R, CFC, or Birth to 5 IL.
- Our newly consolidated team of early childhood staff from Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE),

and Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) will continue to support early childhood programs and services in Illinois under a single agency.

- All information on Transferring agency websites will be available following the Transition.
- Regular meetings and updates to the public and 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:

- IDEC will be a central place to go for early childhood programs and services. All early childhood agency staff from IDHS, ISBE, and DCFS will be under “one roof.”
- Early childhood programs and services will have a strong reliable foundation to grow and improve over the next several years, such as:
 - Improved data practices and processes
 - The new and growing Family and Community Systems Division to support system navigation, customer service, and intentional engagement and partnership with families.
 - Clear ownership of the early childhood agency, program functions, and requirements at IDEC.
- Customer service will be enhanced to receive and respond to questions from families about early childhood programs and services.
 - The [IDEC Website](#) will contain information on programs and services from each of the transferring agencies, including a section for Families.
- 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 take part in ongoing testing of new, easier to use systems with the goal of identifying areas to improve 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 workgroups to lift the current status of early childhood programs and develop recommendations.
 - IDEC is recruiting parents to join our Family Service Workgroups on Supporting Multilingual Learners and Children with Disabilities and

Developmental Delays. Sign up for this using the Workgroup Interest Form in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

- IDEC will have ongoing [Transition Update Meetings](#) to share redesign efforts and collect feedback from families and other system partners.

We look forward to working with you, 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