

Family Advisory Committee

Operated by Illinois Action for Children as part of the Preschool Development planning grant administered by ISBE

Summary May 2023

The Importance of the Family Advisory Committee

The Family Advisory Committee (FAC) of the Early Learning Council (ELC) is a critical vehicle for family engagement and family voice at the state level. It was conceptualized, proposed, and executed with parent leadership and it has dramatically increased awareness of the importance of including family voice when designing, implementing, and evaluating efforts to advance early childhood education and care systems change. In its first two years, the inaugural cohort of the FAC can point to several important accomplishments, including:

- Implementing best practices for family engagement (e.g., meeting times, stipends, translation services) that have become the model for other engagement efforts
- Providing family voice and perspective to numerous other organizations, researchers, and state-level agencies working to improve early childhood services
- Developing their own leadership capacity

Illinois Action for Children (IAFC) has served as the backbone agency for the FAC since its inception. IAFC is fully committed to supporting the FAC as a vehicle for the voices of families to be elevated and incorporated into state-level policy. This work aligns with our organizational commitment to ensuring that family voice, experience, and perspective is centered in decisions that directly impact families as a necessary step towards achieving an equitable early childhood care and education system.

IAFC is eager to support the FAC in 2023 as it continues to evolve and strengthen engagement of parent voice in state-level early childhood systems development and decision-making.

Summary of Illinois Action for Children Work 2022-2023

Below is a summary of IAFC's activities supporting the FAC in 2022:

- Convened 5 FAC meetings: February, April, June, August, and December.
- Facilitated opportunities for FAC members to provide feedback on various initiatives being planned or underway in the state, including Birth to Five Family Council outreach and recruitment, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development-Illinois Statewide Early Childhood Education and Care Strategic Plan, and Illinois' PDG B-5 Planning Grant application.
- Facilitated trainings for FAC members in partnership with COFI and engaged FAC members in parent leadership opportunities, including the Partner Plan Act conference in June 2022.
- Provided monthly stipends to 16 parent members of the FAC, including one parent co-chair who is also a member of the FAC.
- Provided interpreters for FAC meetings.

The IAFC contract for the PDG-B5 Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee contract was executed on April 10, 2023. The term of the grant is from execution to December 30, 2023. Since that time, IAFC has undertaken the following activities:

- Reviewed existing documents and materials regarding the work of the FAC for background and context
- Drafted the job description for the ELC-FAC staffer (under review)
- Identified current IAFC staff to support the work until the full-time staffer is hired
- Met with ISBE
- Held an introductory meeting with the FAC co-chairs
- Held an introductory meeting with COFI, a contractor on the project
- Begun development of a work plan for the project

Additional meetings with ISBE and the FAC co-chairs are scheduled and planning for the first FAC meeting is underway.

Finally, vendors with contracts to do work on PDG, which are administered by the Illinois State Board of Education, are not allowed to “commence billable work in furtherance of the contract prior to final execution of the contract except when permitted pursuant to 30 ILCS 500/20-80.” In other words, FAC work occurred after the last PDG contract ended on December 8th and when the new contract was in place, April 10th, is not reimbursable to the PDG contract.