

Keeping Track of our Early Learning Systems: Illinois' Early Childhood Data Systems



February 6, 2023

To understand and continuously improve our EC system, we need many types of integrated data



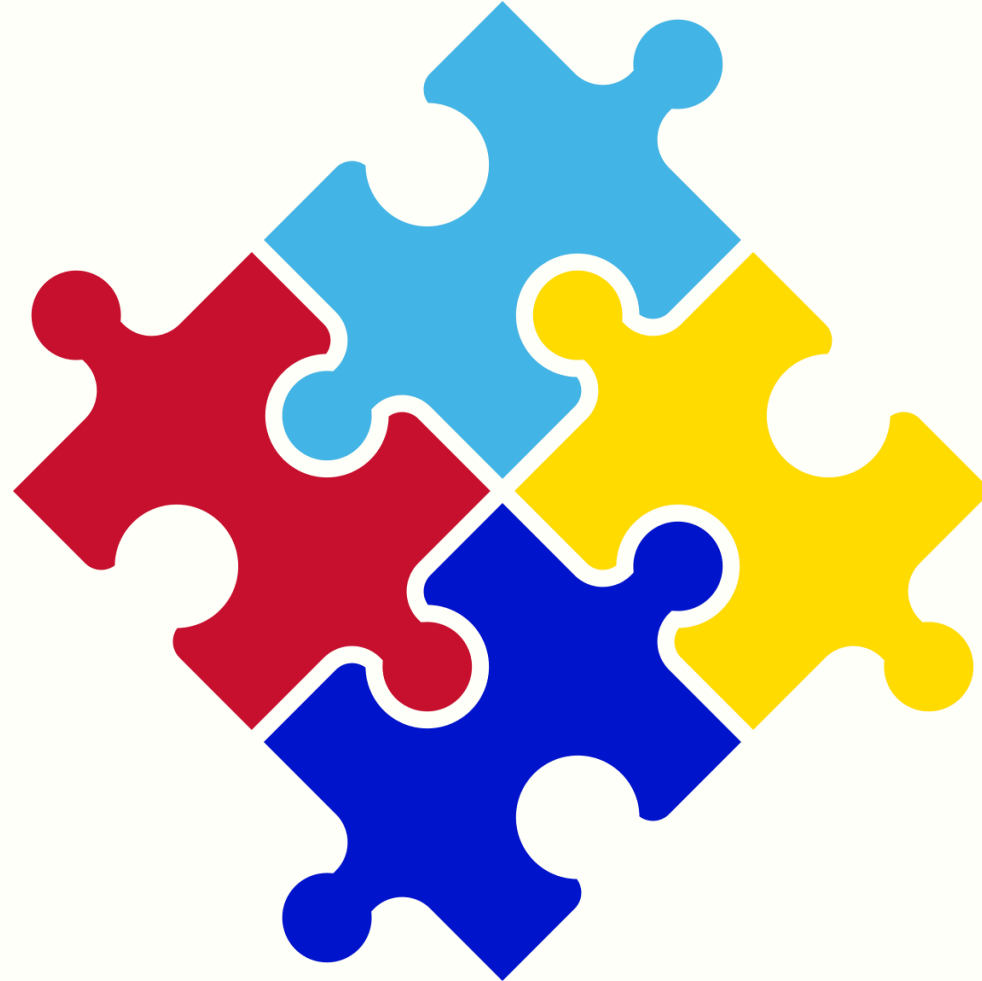
Demographic data:

Who are the children and families who need services?



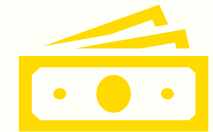
Program data:

What programs do we have available and where?



Workforce data:

Who works in these programs?



Funding Data:

Where is the money flowing, and how does it compare to the need?

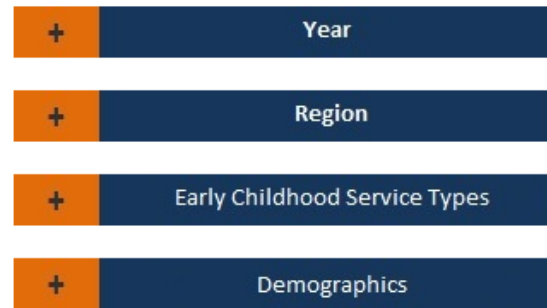
In all cases, we need integrated, **unduplicated** data to understand the overall system

Understanding who needs to be served

Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map

In 2005, as Preschool for All was being developed, the Early Learning Council called for a system to map existing services and demographics to show supply vs demand and **ensure new PFA & PI resources would go to communities with the greatest need.**

IECAM's functionality has grown tremendously over the last 17 years.



Click on a county in the map to obtain all data for that county.



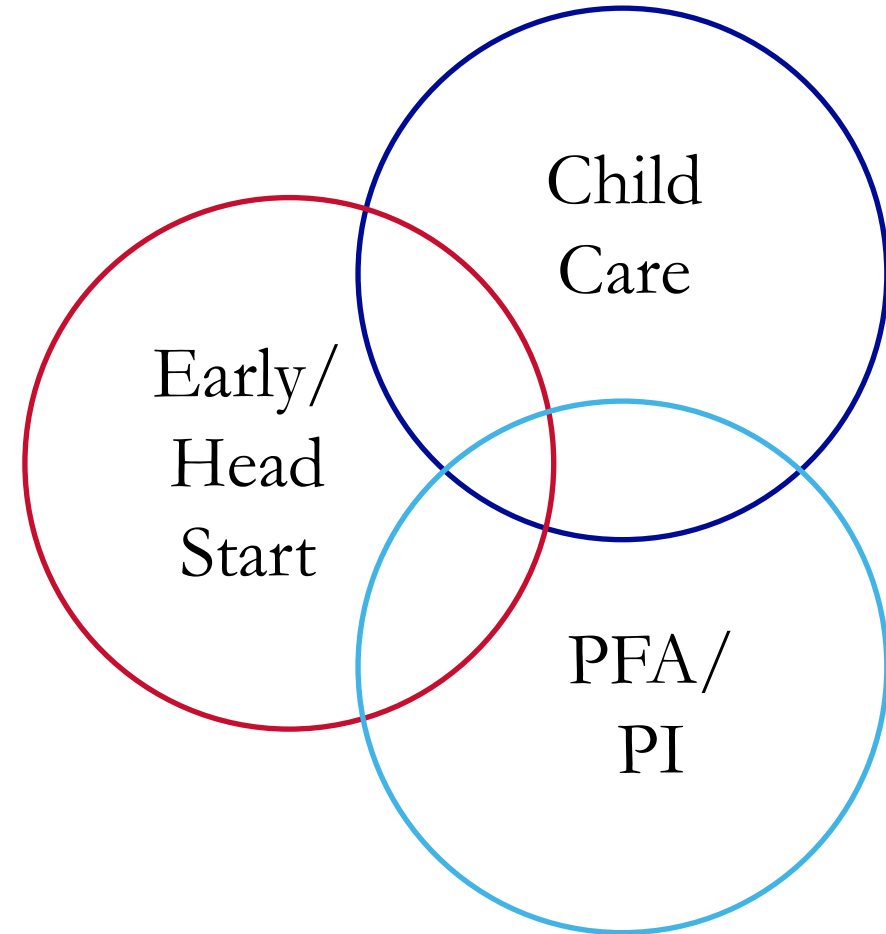
For an interactive map, go to the [GIS Map page](#).

Understanding the capacity in the system

When communities want to understand what services are available for children and families, it's not enough to just know the number of E/HS, PFA/PI and child care slots, because sometimes a single “seat” can be two or even all three of these.

We need an “unduplicated count” of the programs, classrooms and “seats.”

We are still struggling to assemble and maintain this kind of comprehensive picture of ECEC program supply, but efforts are underway.



Understanding how well needs and services align

Early Childhood Education and Care sits within a much larger system of services that young children and their families need, including economic supports, health and mental health services, child welfare services and other social services.

The Risk and Reach Report brings data on a wide range of risk factors together to create an overall index of risk, highlighting those communities where resources are needed. The report then layers on the availability of various services to give a high-level picture of how well needs are being met.



Understanding the Early Learning and Care Workforce

The early childhood workforce works in a wide range of settings—schools, child care centers and homes, Head Start programs, home visiting programs, private Early Intervention practice.

There are multiple databases that capture information about EC professionals and that link them to the places that they work. These databases need to be linked for us to build a comprehensive picture of the workforce.

The new PDG B-5 grant has resources to create a comprehensive report on the workforce.



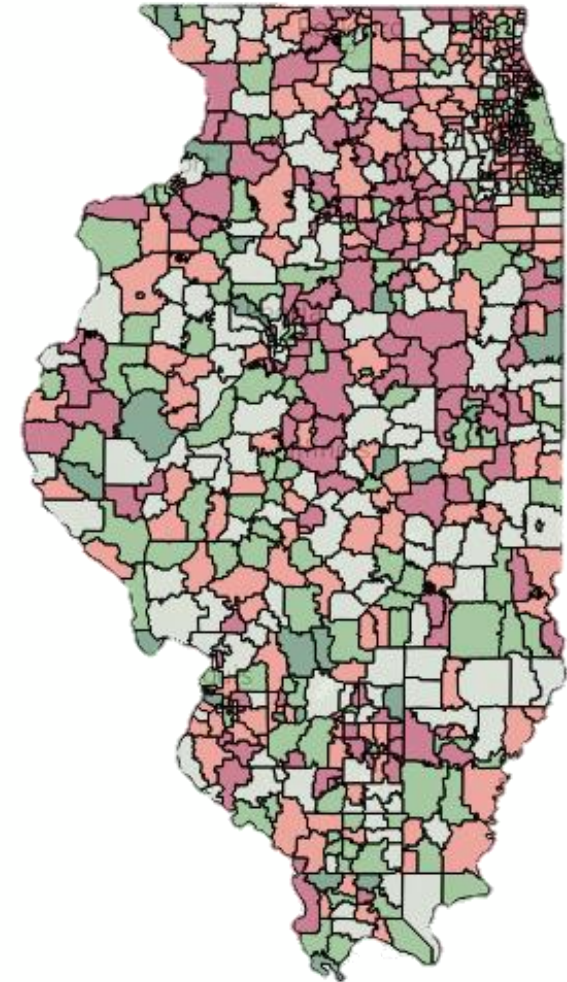
Educator
Licensure
Information
System (ELIS)

Understanding where ECEC funding flows

Children and families have highly varied needs, and it requires different levels of funding to meet those needs. At the same time, early childhood services receive highly varied amounts of funding.

It is important to understand how well the state is doing—across all of its funding streams—in matching the resources provided to the needs, and to see how equitable funding is distributed.

The Early Childhood Funding Equity Map (formerly the GEAM) is being updated with FY21 and FY22 data.



Understanding who actually receives what services

The ELC has consistently called over the last two decades for better information on what services children are receiving, and in what combinations.

In 2011, using federal State Advisory Council Grant funding, Illinois had a study completed to make recommendations on how to create a unified early childhood data system. The strong recommendation was to connect DHS and DCFS data to the Illinois Longitudinal Data System already under development for the education system.

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant funds were invested in ILDS to begin to create an unduplicated count of children participating in these programs.



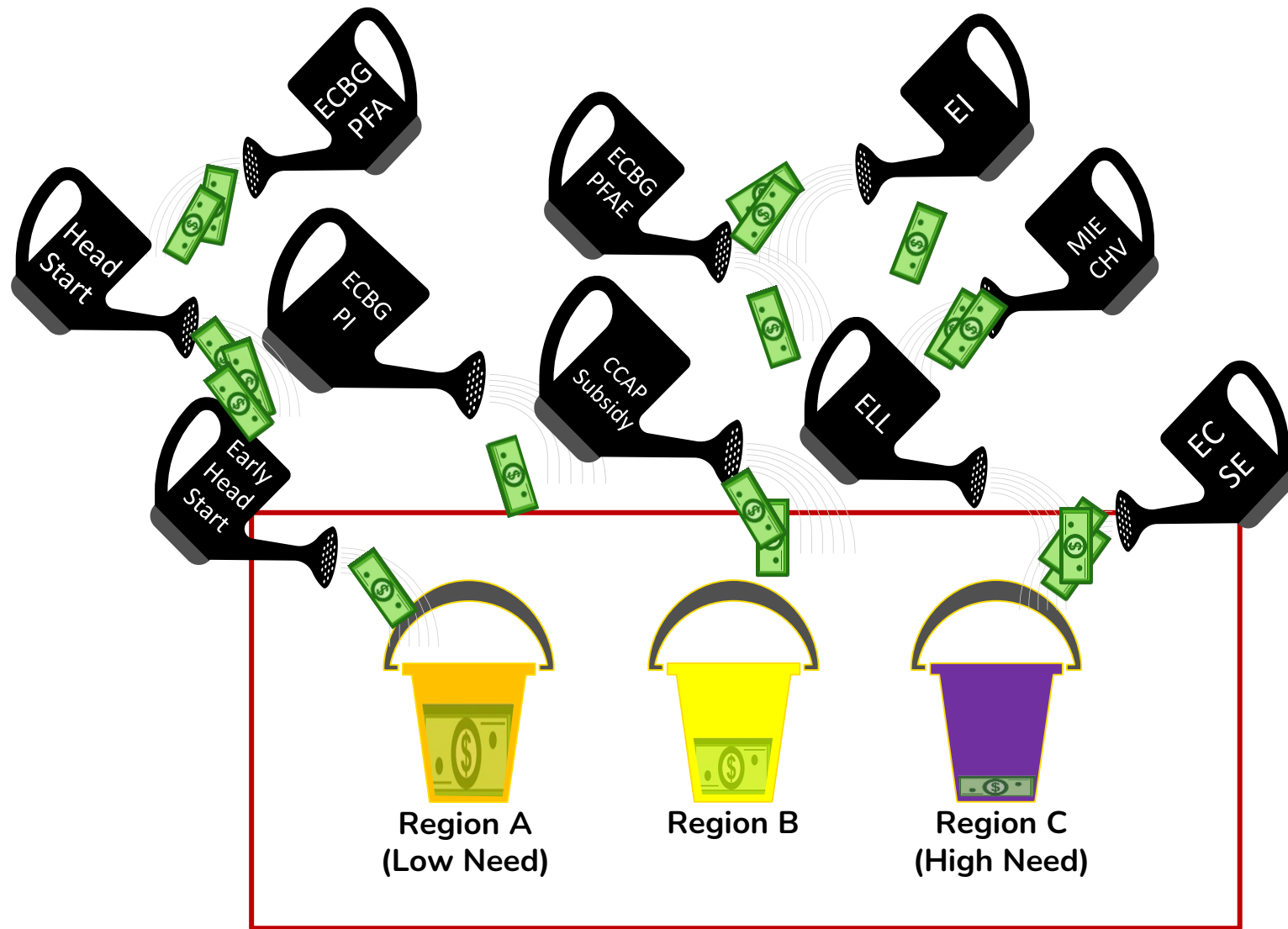
Early Childhood Funding Equity Map

CELFE

Afton
Partners



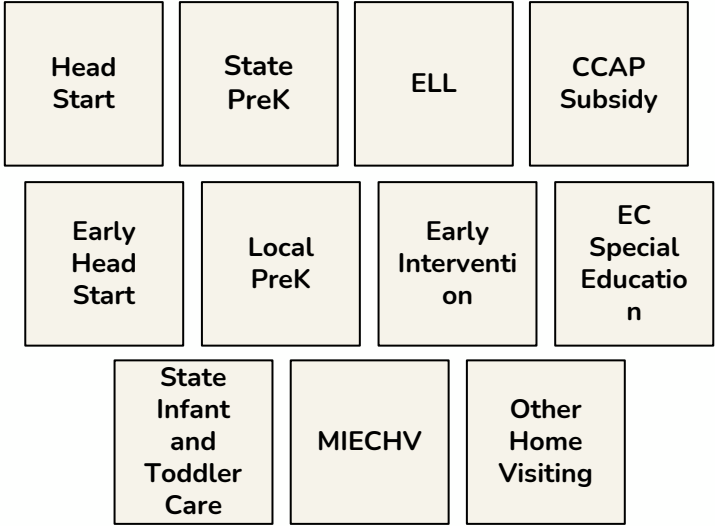
Today's systems limit the State's ability to comprehensively understand how equitable - or inequitable - ECEC funding is today.



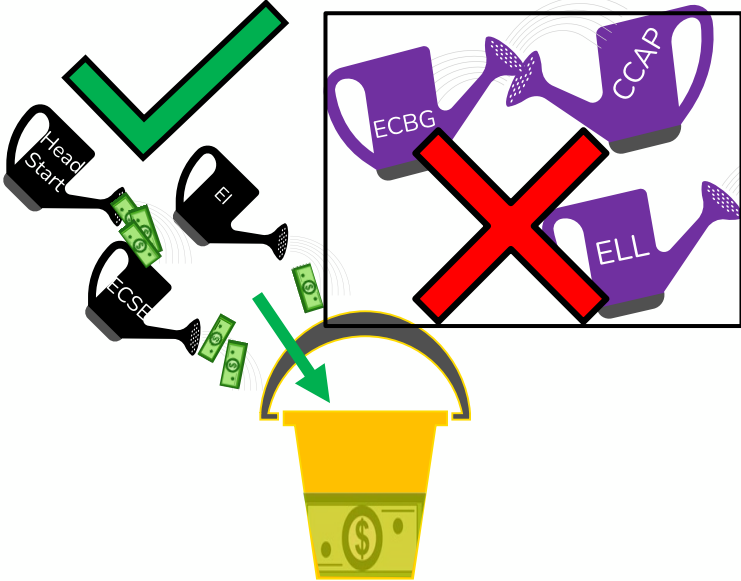
Funding distribution has been focused on the “watering can”-perspective. But what if funding distribution was thought through the “bucket”-perspective?

In order to meet its vision of equity, the state needs to understand...

How are all funding streams allocated?



Who has access to which funds?

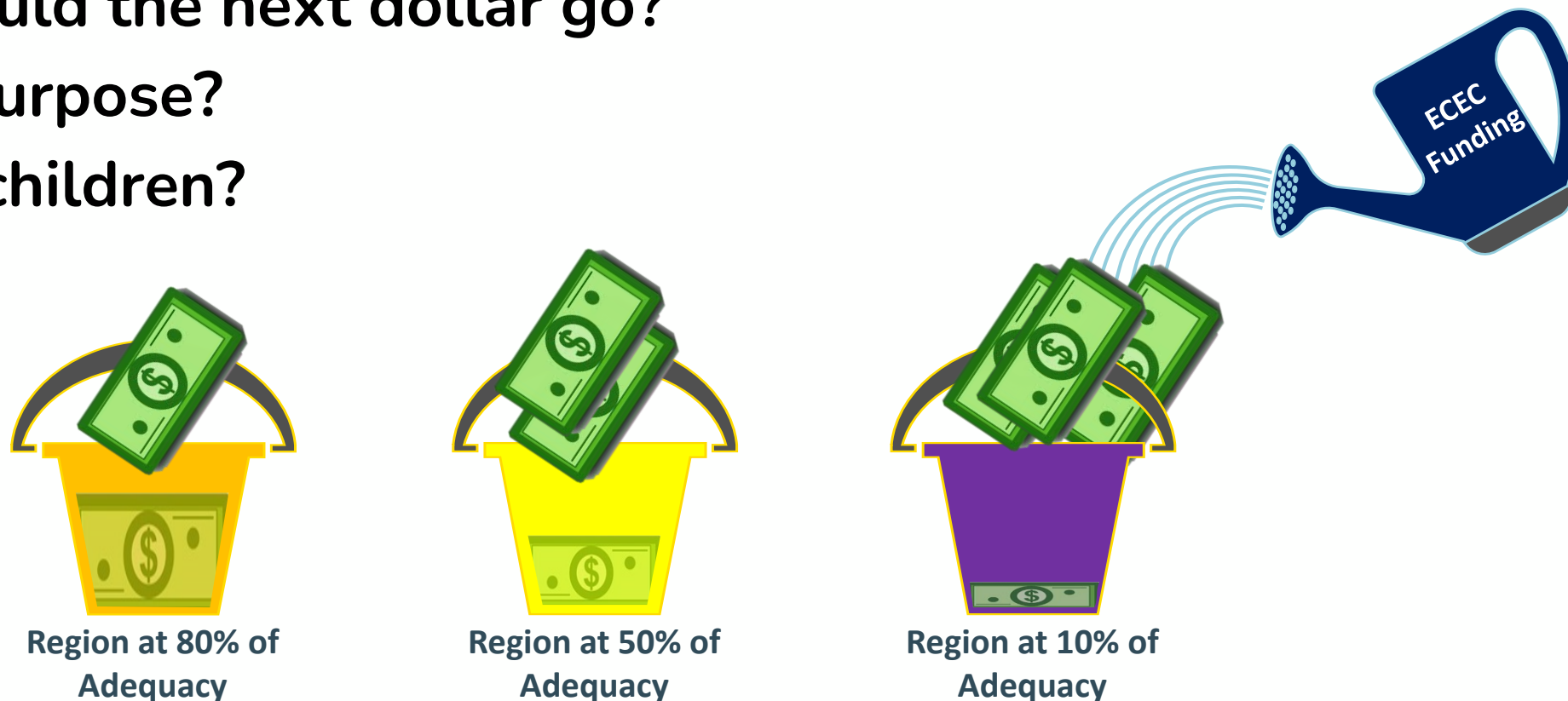


What level of funding is needed, where?



Then the State can rethink its funding approaches to center equity

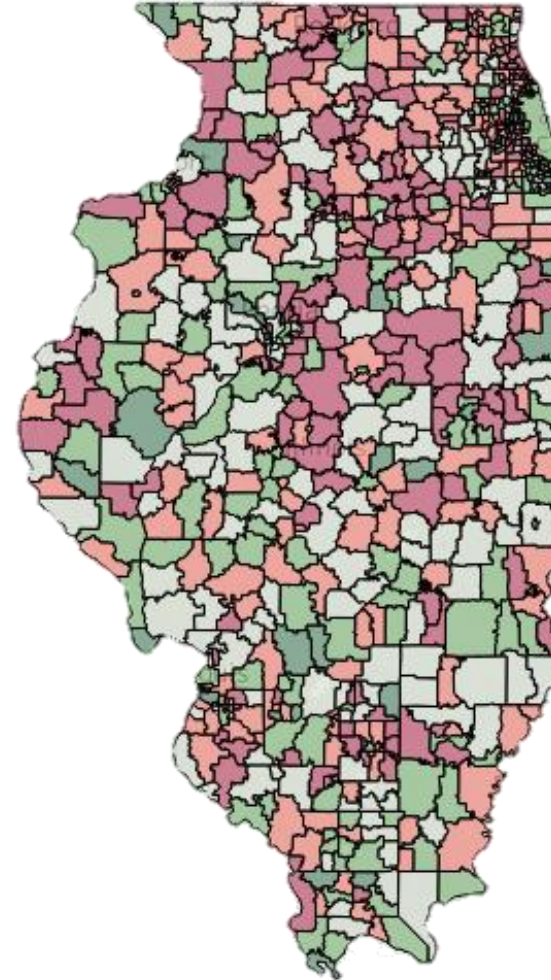
- Where should the next dollar go?
- For what purpose?
- For which children?



By taking the “bucket-focused” approach, States can distribute funding where it is needed most.

Illinois has completed an analysis, previously shared with the ELC, to understand Funding Equity across geographies today, which compares:

- ECEC funding across 750+ Unit and Elementary school district geographies.
- Funding equity across demographic attributes of families and children.
- Current funding to estimates of the level of funding needed for families and children based on demographics.



The Funding Equity Map database establishes both how equitably available funding is distributed today and how far current funding levels are from target amounts needed

Today's System



Region A at \$10k per child

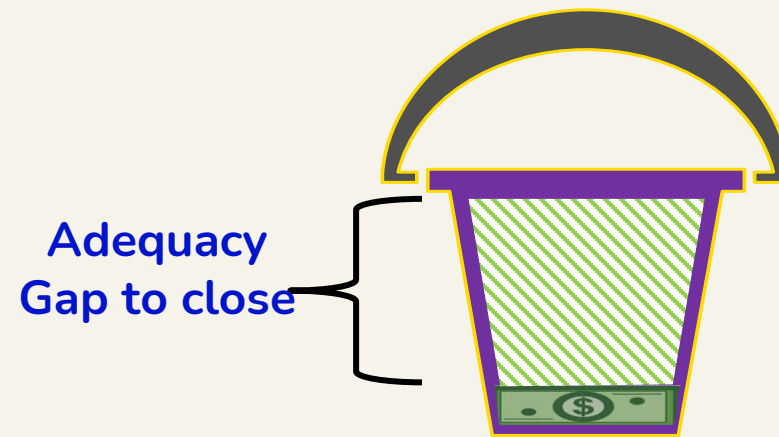


Region B at \$3k per child

How equitably are funds distributed today?

in total and by individual funding source

Adequate System



Region at 10% of Adequacy

How far from adequacy is each region?

The analysis looks at funding per “priority-eligible” child to normalize for need

To understand equity, this analysis looks primarily at **low-income children***, *not all children*, birth through age five

*Plus 10% of all children to acknowledge funds intended to serve those at risk of or with developmental delays or disabilities.

Most ECEC funding streams are intended to serve low-income children birth through age five

Most ECEC funds, therefore, should be going to low-income geographies

Showing funds as compared to all children would skew results: higher-income geographies would appear to be underfunded

With the Funding Equity Map, we can meaningfully compare funding across geographies and needs

Region A

- 70% of children in low-income households
- 40% African American, 25% Hispanic/Latino, 35% White
- 10% families in bilingual households



\$5,000 per priority-eligible child

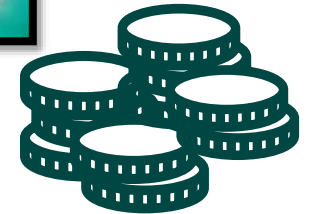


Region B

- 72% of children in low-income households
- 45% African American, 20% Hispanic/Latino, 35% White
- 8% families in bilingual households



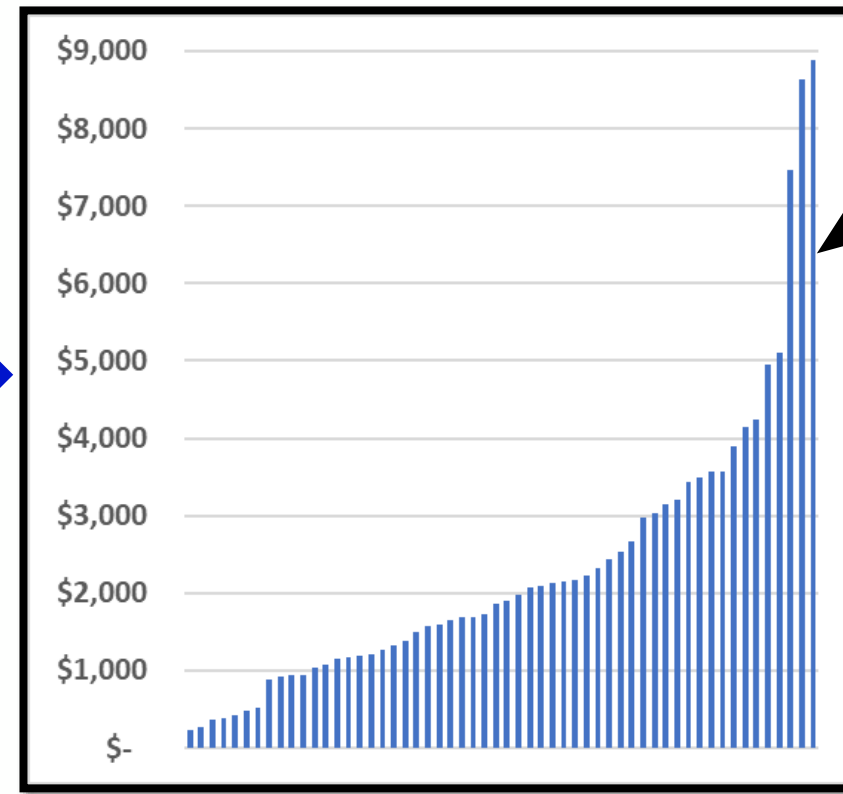
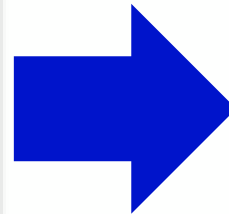
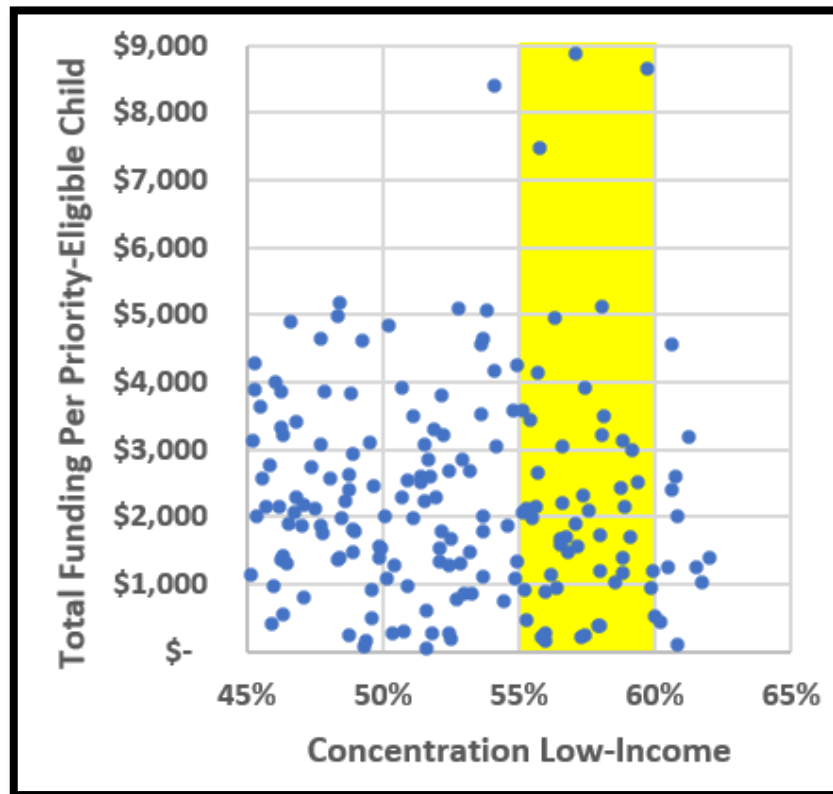
\$2,000 per priority-eligible child



Total ECEC funding per priority-eligible child varies widely across similar school district regions in Illinois

Funding per priority-eligible child varies significantly, even for school district regions with similar levels of concentration of low-income children

Children Ages 0-5; Total State and Federal ECEC Funding per Priority-Eligible Child



Funding for school district regions within 55-60% concentration of low-income children

*Showing 56 school district regions, excluding regions in the top 5% and bottom 5% of funding per priority-eligible child of this dataset

*FY19 data – DRAFT, FOR INTERNAL DISCUSSION ONLY; excluding Home Visiting

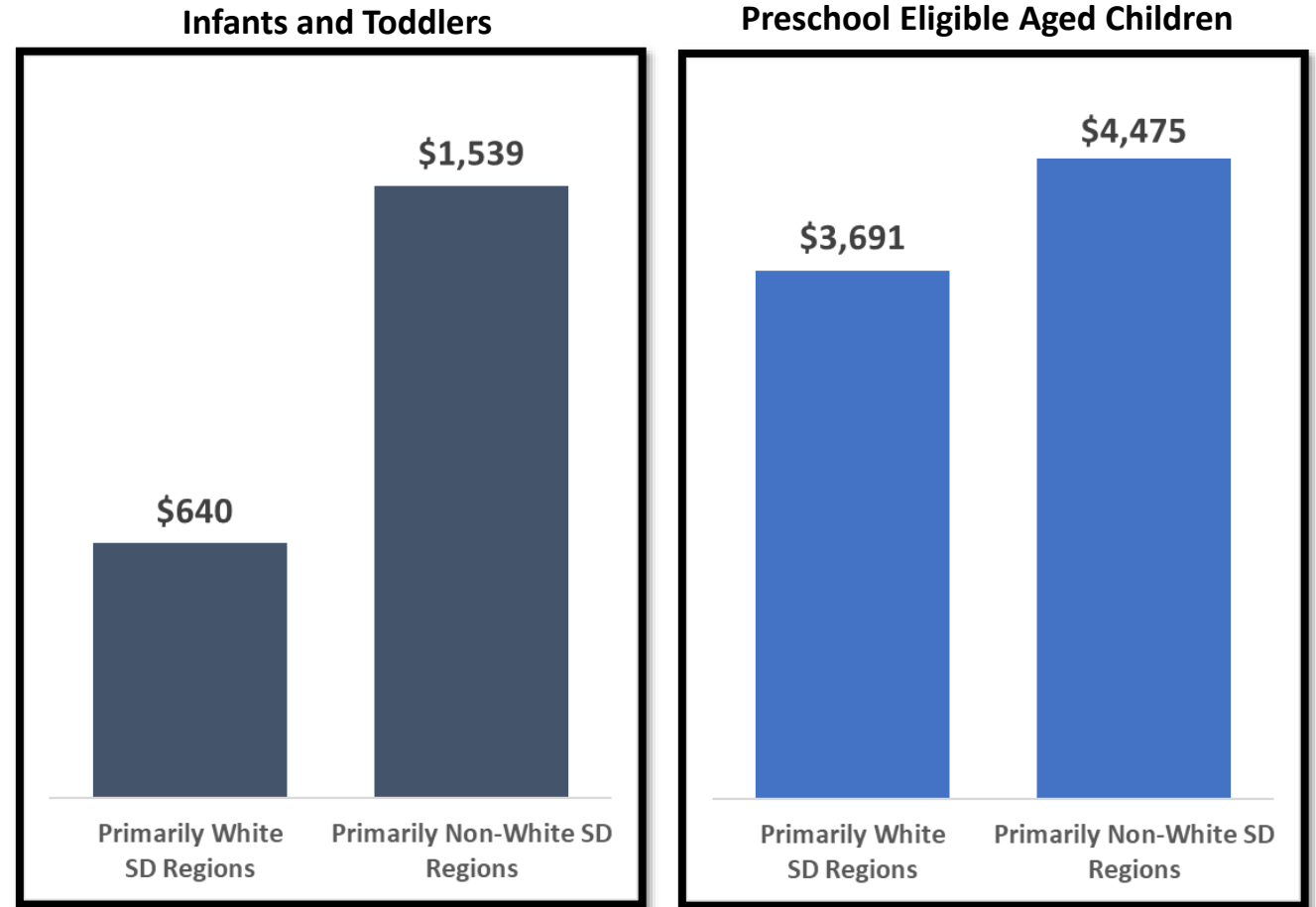
Digging deeper into the tool, we can start to answer important questions for system improvement, such as:

- **Are primarily non-white communities receiving less funding than primarily white communities?**
- **Are different funding streams producing different patterns of equity in funding distribution?**
- **How well are funding streams complementing each other—for example, is PFA funding greater in communities that lack a Head Start site?**

Currently, primarily non-white school district regions receive more funding per priority-eligible child than primarily white regions

Note that this is not true for all districts, as variability in funding is high. Charts shown compare the median level experience.

Median SD Region Funding Per Priority-Eligible Child



Each funding stream contributes differently to the overall pattern of funding equity



Child Care Assistance

Very high variation



Early/Head Start

Only about 1/4 of regions have a site



PFA/PI

High variation, both in number of seats and funding per seat



Early Intervention

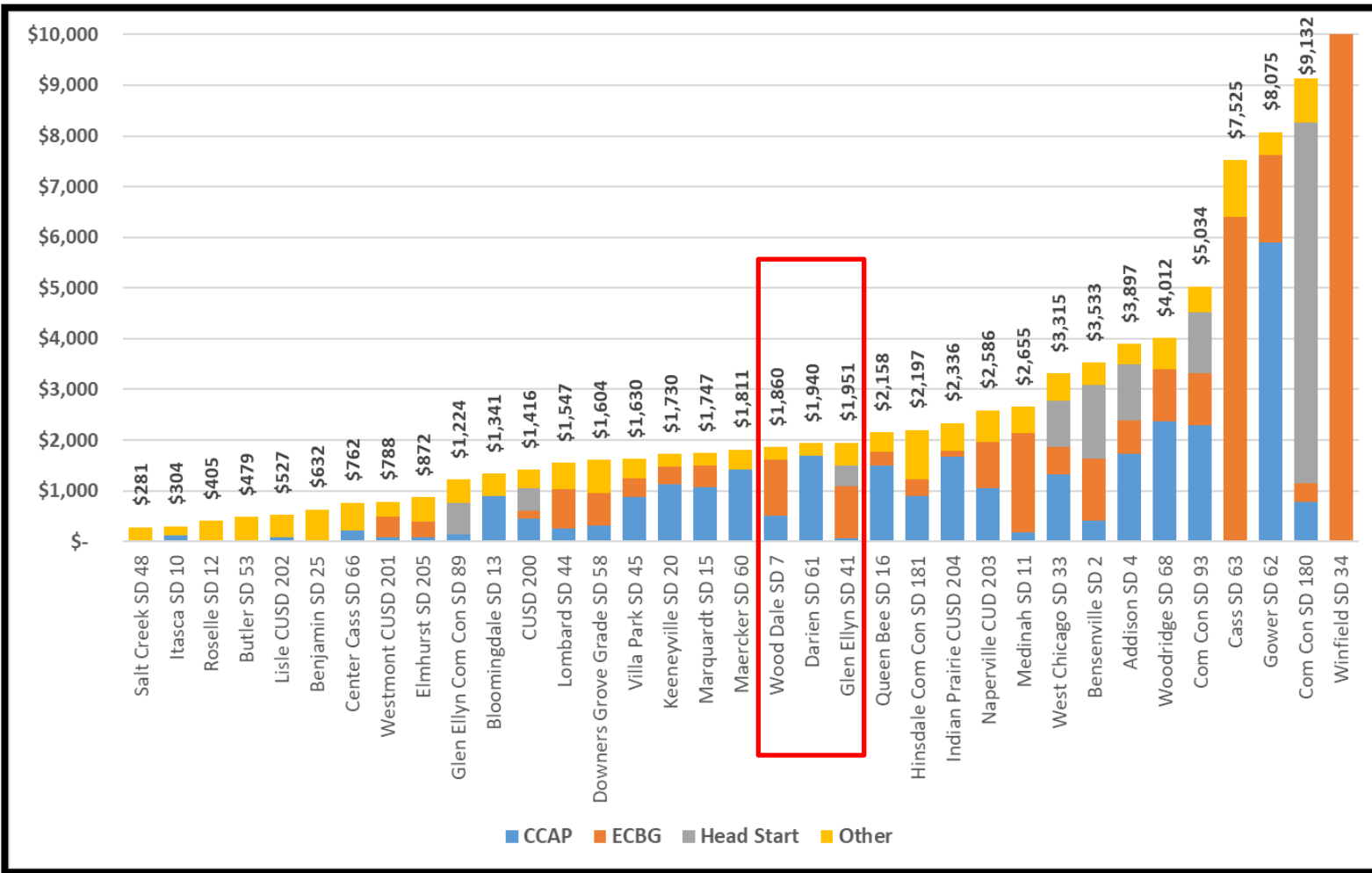
Less variation among communities than other funding streams

The Funding Equity Map enables useful comparison of current funding levels and adequacy gaps across similar school district regions....

... and, from a regional perspective, can allow B5 Action Councils to understand how funding streams contribute to inequities within their region

When looking at DuPage ROE school district regions, for example, we see a wide range in current funding levels across funding sources

DuPage ROE - Current Funding Per Priority-Eligible Child (Ages 0-5)



data subset

Wood Dale SD 7		\$1,860
Darien SD 61		\$1,940
Glen Ellyn SD 41		\$1,951

and for regions funded at similar levels in total, we can see component funding differences

*FY19 data, excluding Home Visiting
*Only showing max \$10K per priority-eligible child

- What types of analyses should be prioritized as the Early Childhood Participation Database becomes operational?
- How should the results of these analyses be shared, and with whom?
- How could the Early Learning Council use the information from the ECEC Funding Equity Map to help advise the state agencies?



Discussion