

Integration and Alignment Committee Meeting

February 23, 2024

10:30 AM to 12:00 PM



Welcome

- Trish Rooney, Associate Director-Illinois Department of Human Services-Division of Early Childhood
- Shauna Ejeh, Vice President-Illinois Action for Children

Agenda

10:30 AM: Welcome

10:35 AM: Early Learning Council Racial Equity Definition (IAC Member Volunteer)

10:40 AM: Review and Approval of IAC Minutes

10:45 AM: Recap of the Recommendations for Aligning Regional Intermediary Functions

10:55 AM: Brainstorming Session

11:50 AM: Public Comments

12:00 PM: Adjourn

Early Learning Council Racial Equity Definition

A racially equitable society values and embraces all racial/ethnic identities. In such a society, one's racial/ethnic identity (particularly Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Asian) is not a factor in an individual's ability to prosper.

An early learning system that is racially equitable is driven by data and ensures that:

Every young child and family regardless of race, ethnicity, and social circumstance has everything s/he/they need to develop optimally; Resources, opportunities, rewards, and burdens are fairly distributed across groups and communities so that those with the greatest challenges are adequately supported and not further disadvantaged; and Systems and policies are designed, reframed, or eliminated to promote greater justice for children and families.

Early Learning Council Racial Equity Priorities (Adopted July 2019)

1. Align and standardize race/ethnicity data collection and reporting;
2. Evaluate and identify whether processes for distributing resources exacerbate racial disparities, including agency contracting;
3. Address racial/ethnic disparities in terms of workforce compensation and advancement;
4. Eliminate racial/ethnic disparities for children participating in all programs that contribute to school readiness and life success by addressing racial disparities in enrollment in preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds and in prenatal to age 3 services.

Approval of Minutes

Integration & Alignment Committee Meetings:

- 4/17/2023
- 7/17/2023
- 8/28/2023
- 9/27/2023

Recap of the Recommendations for Aligning Regional Intermediary Functions

Trish Rooney, IDHS/DEC

Shauna Ejuh, IAFC

ELC-IAC Priority-Overview

ELC-IAC Priority - Overview

Charge: Review the functions of ECEC regional intermediaries and provide directional recommendations to increase efficacies, efficiencies, and alignments of regional supports.

Entities of focus¹:

- ❖ Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) – Child Care Assistance Program
- ❖ Child and Family Connections Offices (CFC) - EI
- ❖ Local Interagency Councils (LIC) - EI
- ❖ Birth to Five Illinois (B-5 IL)
- ❖ All Our Kids Early Childhood Networks (AOK)
- ❖ Coordinated Intake (CI) – MIECHV Home Visiting
- ❖ Regional Offices of Education (ROE)

Engagement:

- ❖ **11** IAC members interviewed to share potential opportunity areas and shape approach.
- ❖ **70** stakeholders from the field provided input via focus groups, including parents, providers, community collaborations, and staff of regional intermediaries.
- ❖ **41** IAC participants completed a survey to prioritize and build on ideas shared by the field.
- ❖ **5** IAC discussions on topic; open to the public with 50+ in attendance at times.
- ❖ **20** focus groups participants & FAC previewed recommendations and responded positively.

Prioritized functions:

- ❖ Resource and referral / System point of entry
- ❖ Eligibility determination
- ❖ Case management
- ❖ T&TA
- ❖ Community development, elevating community voice

¹ The committee recognizes that this scope is not inclusive of the full ECEC system, and that these recommendations are based on the State's selection of regional intermediaries to focus on during this planning period as a first step to aligning regional supports.

IAC Directional Recommendations

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1 Aligned Governance and Systems

- **Align service area boundaries** to simplify navigation and consolidate partnerships (CCR&Rs, CFC/LIC, AOK, CI, B-5 IL/ROE).
- **Unify intake and application forms/processes** for CCAP, EI, and HV to enable system points of entry to provide coordinated intake, eligibility determination, and referrals across ECEC programs (CCR&Rs, CFCs, CI).

2 Integrated Intake & Referral Services

- **Expand system point of entry's scope and capabilities** to provide integrated intake, referral, and a "warm hand off" across ECEC programs (CCR&Rs, CFCs, CI).
- **Develop a state-wide integrated intake & referral data system** to streamline referrals between regional intermediaries & providers (CCR&Rs, CFC, CI, AOK).
- **Streamline and consolidate support for referrals to community resources** (CCR&Rs, CFCs, CI).

3 Shared Community Development

- **Merge regional intermediary councils and meetings to create one planning/reporting table per region** for ECEC, coordinated by one regional intermediary and with a defined role and sufficient capacity for the other regional intermediaries to participate (CCR&Rs, LIC/CFC, AOK, CI, B-5 IL, ROE).
- **Develop a single, shared ECEC agenda** for each region that all regional intermediaries support (CCR&Rs, LIC/CFC, AOK, CI, B-5 IL, ROE).
- **Unify needs assessments and parent surveys into one per region, and create universal access to this input. Reduce cadence of assessments/surveys** to shift resources to driving change (CCR&Rs, LIC, B-5 IL, AOK).

Additional considerations

- Extend integrated intake & referral to include PFA/PFAE, PI, HS/EHS, and other DHS programs for families (e.g., WIC, Family Connects, etc.)
- Continue to analyze T&TA alignments but inclusive of all 3rd party providers and within a provider-focused context (e.g., Workforce Development)
- Define a model for supporting EC local collaborations more comprehensively and the role of regional intermediaries in this

*In parentheses are the intermediaries that each recommendation is relevant to based on the type of supports they provide.

Consideration to Proceed

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- ▶ Streamlining intermediary supports is one of the steps towards moving to a new combined State agency
- ▶ This a positive step forward in making it easier for children and families to access services
- ▶ We have heard from the field throughout this process that these changes need to happen

*"This is exactly what we need. I feel so sorry for the families who are trying to navigate all this. It's hard!"
Provider*

*"I completely agree with these recommendations and think this is really exciting."
Regional Intermediary*

*"There is a lot to this. Hopefully we can implement incrementally to help families sooner rather than later."
Regional Intermediary*

4

Brainstorming Session

Questions

- What would the Integration and Alignment Committee like to focus on as we move to one State agency?
- What do we think that the TAC needs to know?
- What are some barriers to children and families accessing services that we think must be addressed with the new agency?
- What are some “big rocks” in the current system that the TAC should be aware of?

Public Comments

Trish Rooney, IDHS/DEC

Shauna Ejuh, IAFC

Adjourn

Thank you