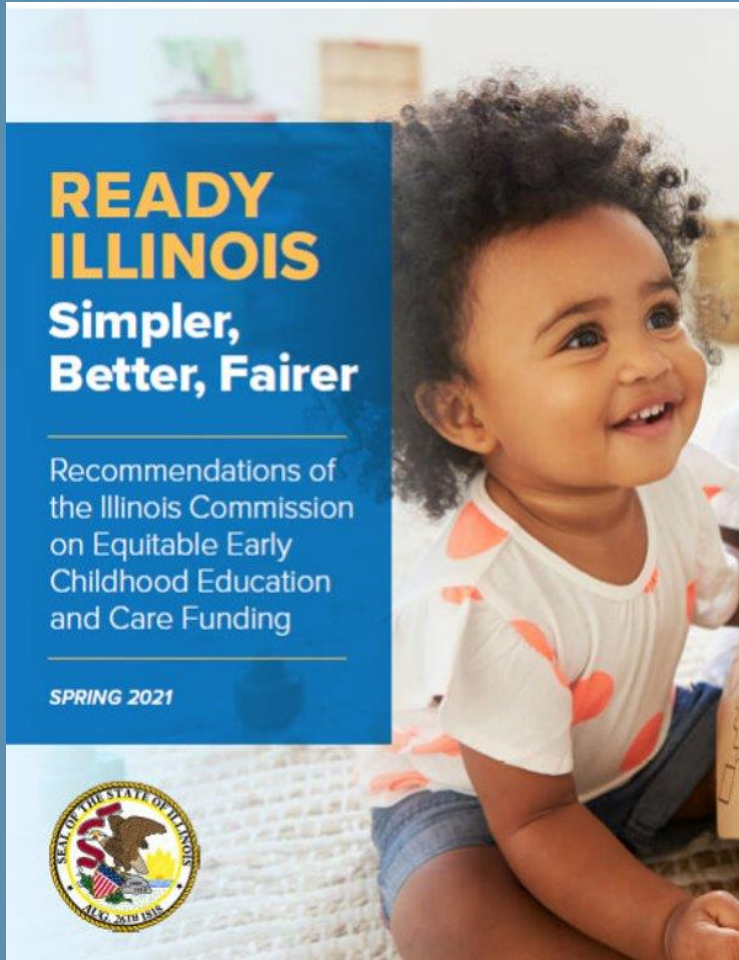


# The Department Of Early Childhood - The Multi- Year Path to a New State Agency

June 2024  
Update





# A single agency for Early Childhood will be:



**Easier for parents**

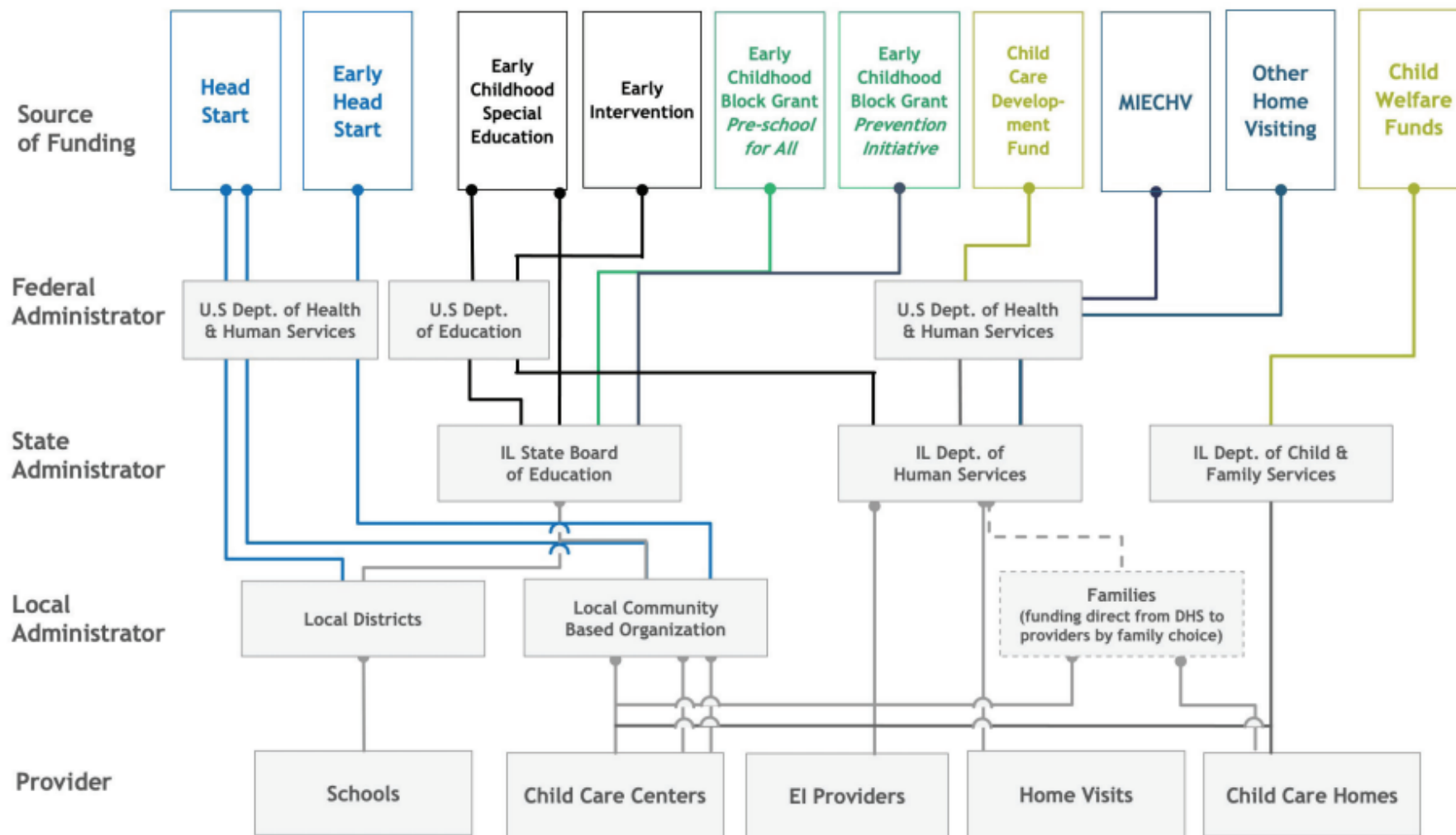


**Simpler for providers**

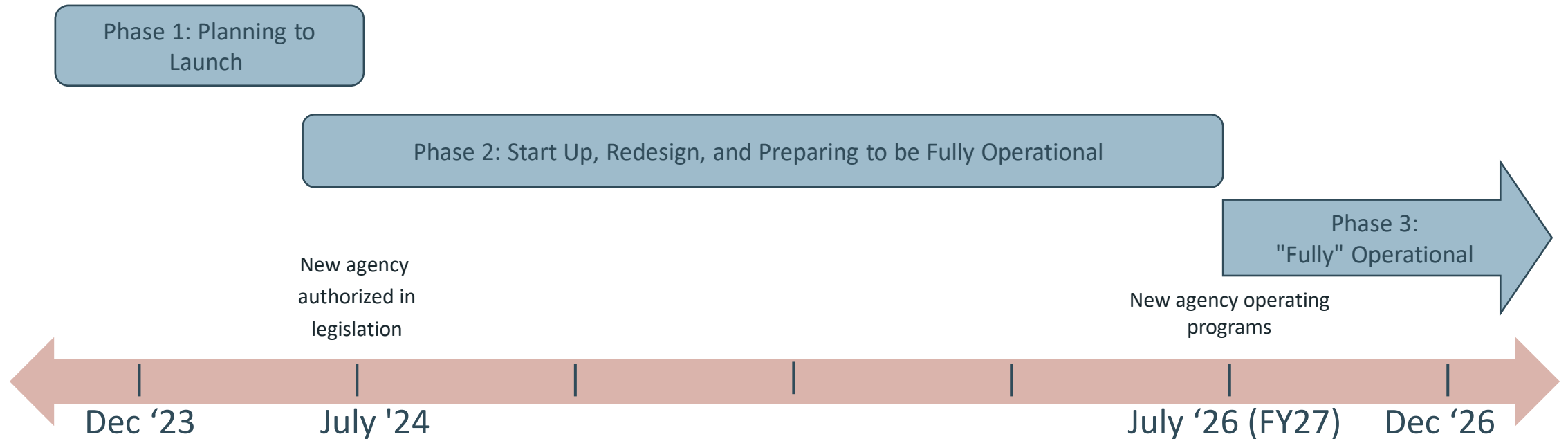


**More cohesive and streamlined for the state**

# Illinois' early childhood system is too complex, which leads to inequity and inefficiency.

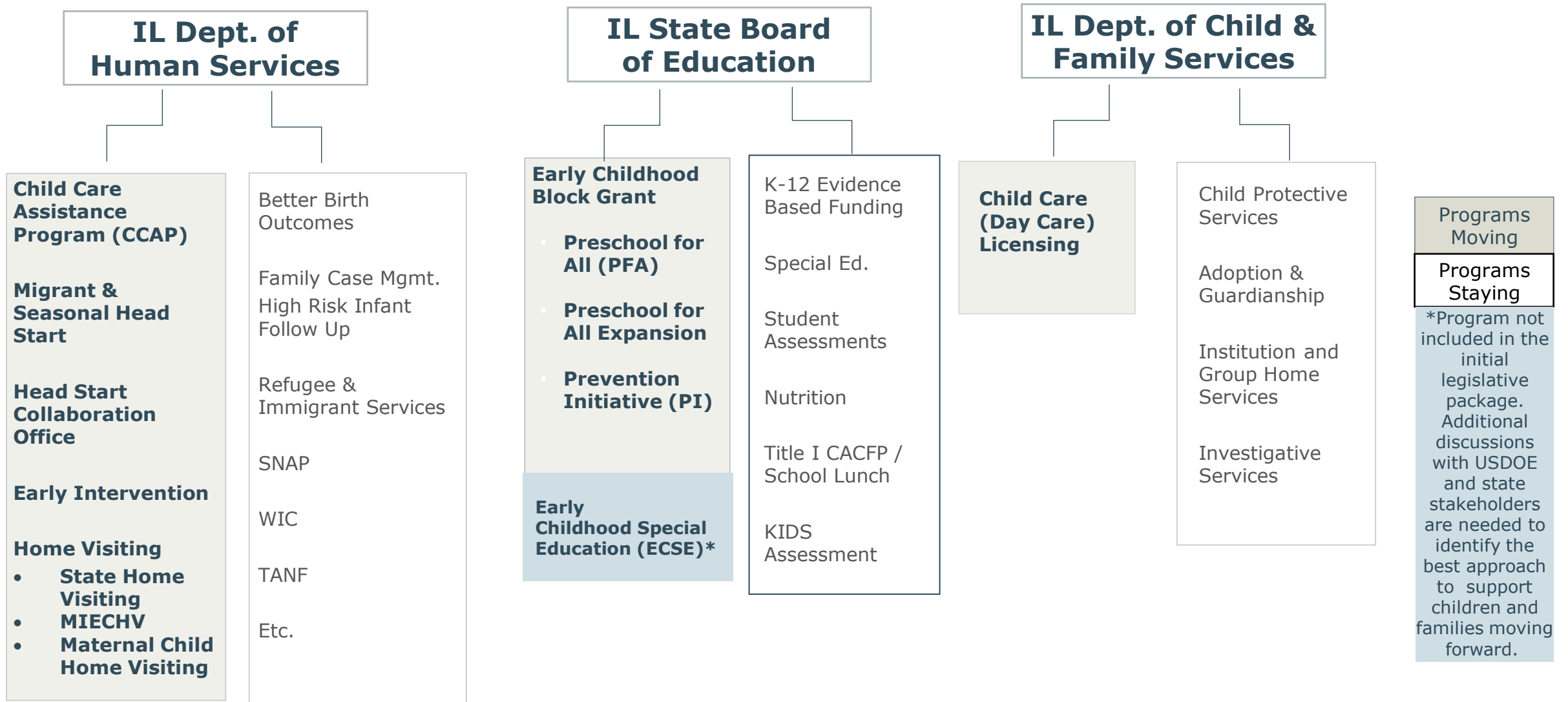


# The transition to a new agency is on a multi-year timeline with three phases.

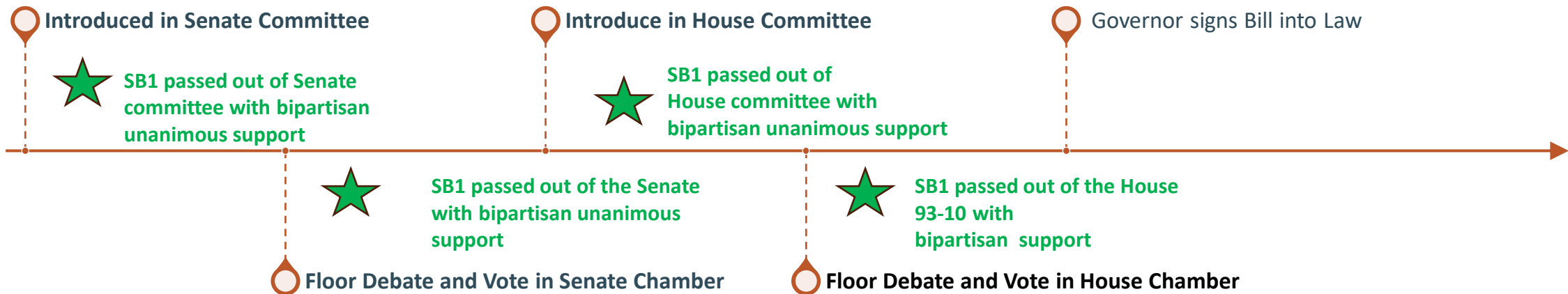


ISBE, IDHS, and DCFS continue to administer programs and lead continuous quality improvement

# Early childhood services will move; broader family and school supports will remain at home agencies.



# Senate Bill 1 passes out of the Illinois General Assembly!



# Initial Legislation Overview (SB1)

## What the initial legislation does...

- ✓ Does propose the establishment of the new Department of Early Childhood on July 1, 2024
- ✓ Does propose to move early childhood programs and services from legacy agencies to the Department of Early Childhood on July 1, 2026
- ✓ Does propose to add the Department of Early Childhood to applicable State advisory councils
- ✓ Does propose the new Department to designate a body by 7/1/26 to advise the Department on an ongoing basis
- ✓ Does propose to add the Department of Early Childhood to applicable Illinois code (e.g., Civil Administrative Code of Illinois, etc.)

## What the initial legislation doesn't do...

- Does not propose any policy changes to existing programs or services
- Does not propose any implementation changes to existing program or services (other than to move them to the new agency in 2026)
- Does not make any substantive adjustments to advisory groups or committees (e.g., Early Learning Council, Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention)

## **Phase 2: Transition work begins by centering equity, family and provider voice in both the process and outcomes.**

- **Starting with parents and providers least centered in the current system**
  - **to advance racial and regional equity**
  - **to center families/parents with young children with special needs**
- **Establish a goal to build a better system for multilingual family services and supports for children receiving special education services**
- **Create multiple and ongoing opportunities and modalities for parents and providers to engage and help redesign the system**
- **Engage in qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis, and use**





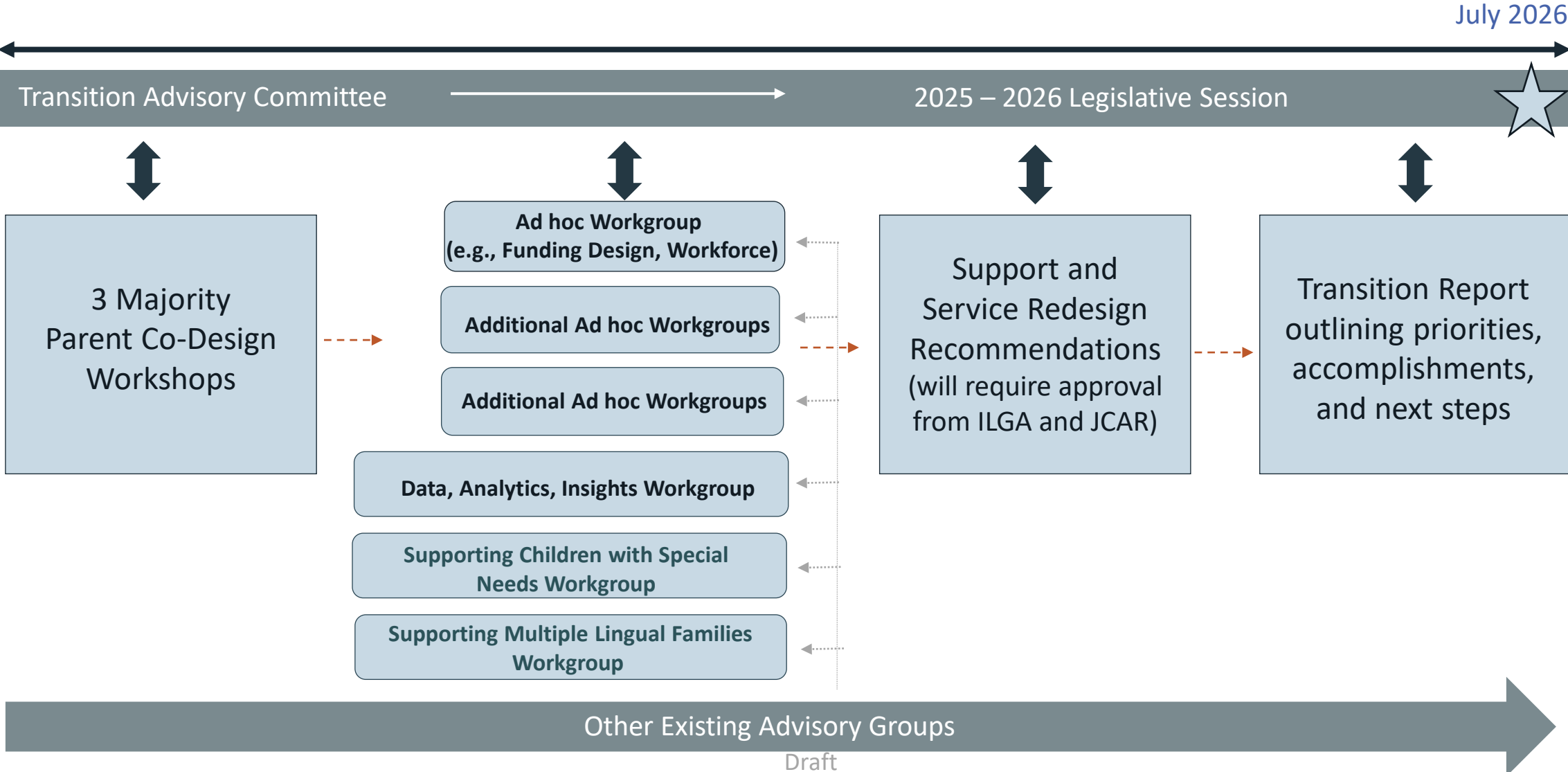
# Early Childhood Transition TAC Charge

The state has established the **Transition Advisory Committee (TAC)**, comprised of representatives with diverse perspectives from across the state, to serve as an external advisory committee as the state moves toward a single ECE agency.

The TAC will **seek and help the state make meaning of stakeholder input** in preparation for the transition, with a **particular emphasis on understanding families' goals and needs** from a comprehensive ECE system for Illinois children.

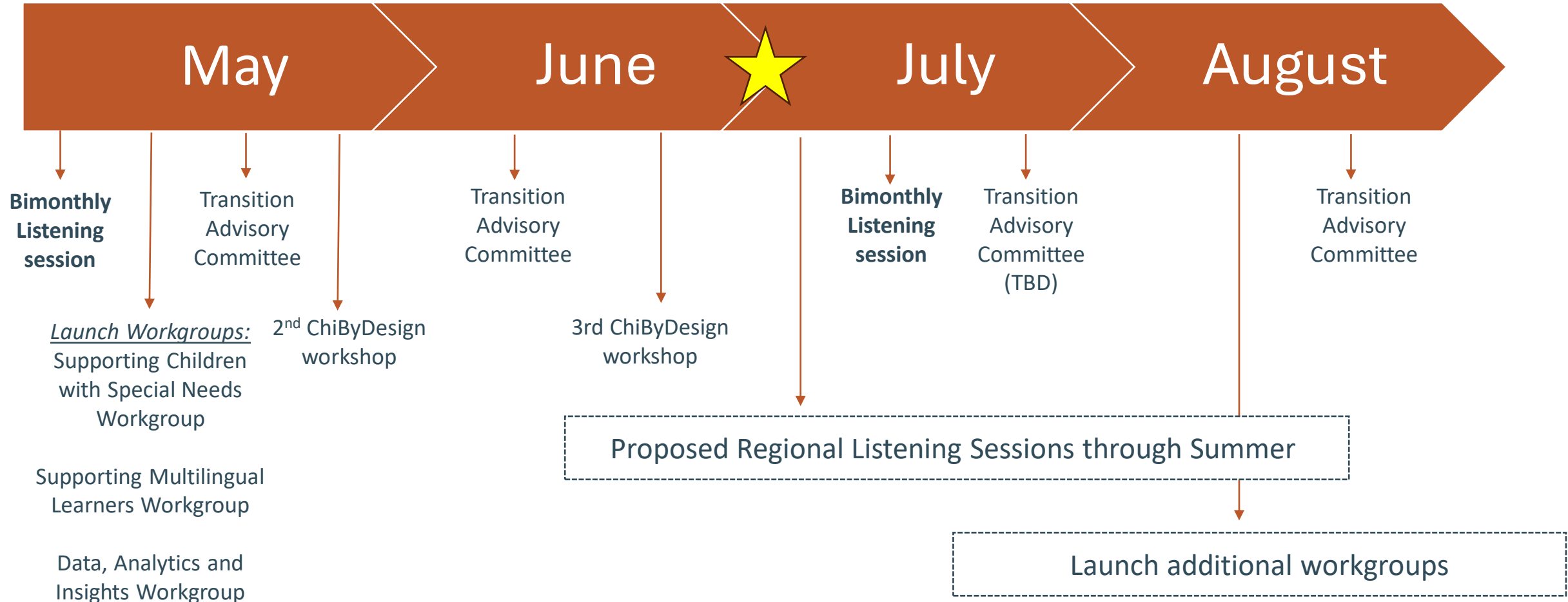
The Transition Advisory Committee will work with the State's Early Childhood Transition Director, Ann Whalen, to **release a report by December 31, 2025.**

# Phase 2 Approach to Redesign & Engagement



# Summer 2024 Engagement

July 1, 2024- Launch  
Department of Early Childhood



# Early Childhood Transition Updates

- Website:
  - <https://oecd.illinois.gov/early-childhood-education-and-care-transition-planning.html>
- Listening & Feedback and sign-up forms:
  - Survey Link (English):  
<https://forms.gle/8fRk9Hv7tdZ9DaGY6>
  - Survey Link (Español):  
<https://forms.gle/UbYhkd641ZjPgUnN8>





Questions?

# APPENDIX

# Today, Illinois' Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services provide essential supports to families, but the state can do more



**~437k**

children ages 0-2 in Illinois<sup>1</sup>



**~309k**

children ages 3-4 in Illinois<sup>1</sup>



**~274k\***

capacity to provide care for children under 5 in Illinois<sup>2</sup>



**~269k**

children 0-4 in families earning low incomes<sup>3</sup>

**~746k** kids in IL under 5 today<sup>1</sup>



All families deserve loving, affordable, convenient care but lack access to high-quality ECEC options. In 2023, our system was unable to meet children and families needs and less than 30% of children demonstrated full readiness across language/literacy, math, and social-emotional domains when they entered kindergarten.

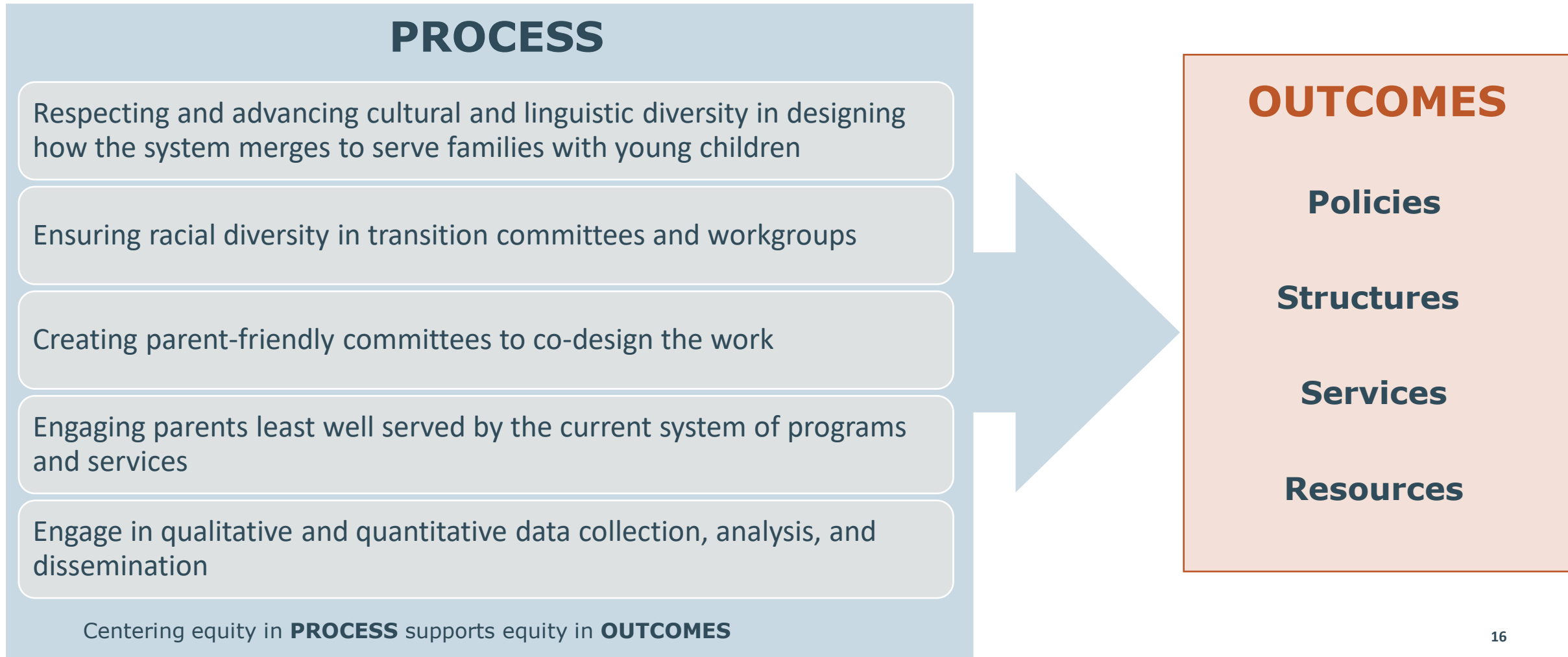
<sup>1</sup>IECAM Database, 2021 census data

<sup>2</sup>IECAM Database, 2022 \*includes licensed centers, licensed-exempt centers, and licensed family child care homes.

<sup>3</sup>IECAM Database, 2021 census data children < 200% FPL for children ages 0-4

# Designing an integrated system (Phase 2) will center racial, regional equity and parent participation

The transition will center equity in process, vision for system, and outcomes of programs and services.





# Tremendous progress in early childhood has been made since 2019



## Structures

- Early Childhood Funding Commission
- Creation of Division of Early Childhood within IDHS
- Launch of Birth to Five Councils
- Announcement of unified early childhood state agency and launched a transition process



## Programs

- Smart Start Illinois:
  - Revamp ISBE Pre-K RFP and committed to 20,000 new pre-k slots over four years to target preschool deserts
  - Expand the Home Visiting Program
- Investment in the CCAP program
- Investment in Early Intervention (EI) programs to enhance services for families
- Capital investments in new facilities



## Workforce

- Smart Start Illinois:
  - Nation-leading child care Workforce Grants
  - Investment in Early Intervention to give providers a raise
- Additional scholarships and apprenticeships for early childhood educators through the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE)
- Bonuses for child care workers and EI providers

# Advancing racial equity in designing the new agency

"Racial equity requires explicit acknowledgement of our racial history in addressing policy problems, shifting power to groups historically excluded from decision-making, and **co-designing future policy** to achieve outcomes that are no longer predicted by race." -Chicago United for Equity (CUE)



Chicago United for Equity (CUE) uses the analogy of baking a cupcake. "To use the analogy of baking a cupcake, racial equity cannot be the sprinkles, it must be the flour."

Our approach to racial equity adds parents to the process of choosing what type of cupcake to make and designing the recipe, as well as in the ingredients.

# Transition Advisory Committee Members

- Bela Moté, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Carole Robertson Center for Learning- TAC Chair
- Makisha Binns, home child care provider
- Katie Cobb, Principal/Director of Early Childhood Programs at Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center in Peoria Public School District 150
- Johnna Darragh-Ernst, Distinguished Professor of Early Childhood Education at Heartland Community College
- Shontae Fennoy, early childhood teacher in East St. Louis school District 189
- Tonya Frehner, Regional Council Manager (Region21) at Birth to Five Illinois
- Rochelle Golliday, Executive Director and Owner of Cuddle Care, Inc
- Kesha Harris, parent
- LaKeesha James-Smith, parent
- Marcy Mendenhall, President and Chief Executive Officer of SAL Community Services
- Janice Moenster, Director of Early Childhood Services at Brightpoint
- Dara Munson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Family Focus
- Mariana Osoria, First Deputy of Human Services, City of Chicago
- Angel Powell-Muldrow, Principal in District 148
- Edgar Ramirez, Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Commons
- Robin Steans, President of Advance Illinois
- Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro, Vice President of Education Policy & Research at the Latino Policy Forum
- Sarah Ziemba, Chief Executive Officer of Shine Therapy Services

# There are multiple opportunities to engage and gather input from diverse voices and perspectives.



 New opportunities to engage specifically around Transition and ECEC governance

# Additional opportunities for engagement and communications

## Transition Advisory Committee

- Thursday, December 14, 2023
- Tuesday, January 9, 2024, from 5:30-7pm
- Tuesday, February 27, 2024, from 5:30-7pm
- Tuesday, March 12, 2024, from 5:30-7pm
- Tuesday, April 9, 2024, from 5:30-7pm
- Tuesday, May 21, 2024, from 5:30-7pm
- Tuesday, June 18, 2024, from 5:30-7pm

## Bi-Monthly Listening Sessions

- Friday, January 19, 2024, from 12:00 – 1:00pm
- Friday, March 15, 2024, from 12:00 – 1:00pm
- Friday, May 17, 2024, from 12:00 – 1:00pm
- Friday, July 19, 2024, from 12:00 – 1:00pm

## Website & Surveys

- Currently, in the short term, Transition information and materials are posted on the ELC website.
- There are open surveys for stakeholders to share ongoing feedback and questions they have about the Transition and the TAC meetings.

# States that have implemented governance changes recently

State	Name of Agency	When (Launch dates)	Other
Minnesota	Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families	July 2024	Implementation Office was established on July 1, 2023 and the transition plan calls for the administration to spend the year preparing for the department to be established, which would happen on that date (July 1, 2024). The necessary transfers would then begin and take place over the following year, until July 1, 2025.
Ohio	Department of Children and Youth	July 2023	During the first week in October 2023, the Department of Education was renamed the Department of Education and Workforce a new agency. Programs will transfer to the new agency by Jan. 1, 2025.
Oregon	Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care	July 2023	
Colorado	Colorado Department of Early Childhood	July 2022	
New Mexico	New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department	July 2020	
Washington	Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF)	July 2017	
Alabama	Department of Early Childhood Education	August 2015	Legislation renamed from the Department of Children’s Affairs and expanded the duties of the secretary to include the development of a comprehensive system of early learning and care.
Connecticut	Office of Early Childhood	2013	
Georgia	Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning	2004	
Massachusetts	Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)	July 2005	
California	Child Care and Development Division, Department of Social Services	July 2021	consolidated all but “transitional kindergarten” into Social Services