

Department of Early Childhood Transition Planning: **Supporting Children with Special Needs**

Workgroup Charter

Purpose
<p>In collaboration with and in support of the development of the new agency, this workgroup will develop specific recommendations to align and improve early childhood services, programs, and supports for children special needs, their families, and the practitioners who support them.</p> <p>This workgroup will have an intentional focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting inclusion of children with special needs in their natural environment/least restrictive environments,• Improving social-emotional skills and knowledge (outcomes)• Creating seamless transitions from services under IDEA Part C/Early Intervention to IDEA Part B 619/ECSE, and then onto IDEA Part B 611/K-12• Identifying opportunities for structural program alignment between Part C and Part B 619 (e.g., determine connections under one agency or multiple agencies)• Identifying professional development opportunities for early childhood practitioners (e.g., child care, etc.)
Background Information
<p>Illinois is committed to providing equitable access and opportunities to all children in early childhood programs (and beyond). Starting in Spring 2024 as part of the development of the Department of Early Childhood, the Transition Team will launch a workgroup to build on the 2021 Funding Commission report, the 2020 PDG Inclusion of Young Children with Disabilities in Early Care and Education Settings Strategic Plan, and work underway by the ELC and IIECI to refine recommendations for future priorities, program alignment, and improvement for ECSE.</p>
Goals & Objectives
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To understand the current landscape, context, plans, and recommendations for programs serving children and families with varying abilities<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Determine programs and services that should be included in workgroupb. Determine guardrails for workgroup (in scope/out of scope)c. Document current context, lessons learned from other states, and implications for new agency2. To prepare and present recommendations for programs and the new agency that centers children, families, and practitioners with varying abilities<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Center and document family ideas for program connections and alignmentb. Explore recommendations with families and communities furthest from opportunity, advocacy organizations, state agencies, LEAs, intermediaries, legislators, and others identified

- c. Finalize recommendations and share with the state agencies, TAC, ELC, and IIECI, and other groups as needed

Outcomes & Deliverables

Create a child, family, and community-friendly set of recommendations, centered in equity, that

- aligns to identified family needs and solutions,
- meets federal and state requirements,
- attends to feasibility and sustainability, and
- supports agency and administration mission, vision, and values.

Timeline

2024	February	Create workgroup charter
	March	Create criteria for membership selection
	April	Finalize workgroup membership Plan for first workgroup meeting
	May	Facilitate first workgroup meeting
	June	Review parent feedback from ChiByDesign Meeting
	July	Meeting
	August	Meeting
	September	Meeting
	October	Meeting
	November	Meeting; draft recommendations
	December	Submit final recommendations
	2025	January
February		Follow-up activities
Mach		Follow-up activities

Membership

Johnna Darragh-Ernst, Transition Advisory Committee (TAC) Member
 Janice Moenster, Transition Advisory Committee (TAC) Member
 Rep. Maura Hirschauer, State Representative

Mindy Bryan, Parent
Debra Draper, Parent
Sanna Jesse, Parent
Lynda William, Parent
Simone Gatlin, Child Care Provider
Karen Berman, Advocate
Laura Lindsey, Local Education Agency/School District
Michelle Olivarez-O'Shea, Local Education Agency/School District
Benny Delgado, Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)
Kristy Doan, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
Theenshina Mayfield, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Community Agreements & Ways of Working

- Stay engaged
- Speak your truth in a safe and confidential environment
- Take space, make space
- Allow time for interpretation
- Experience discomfort, and name it
- Show empathy
- Expect and accept a lack of closure
- Come prepared to actively participate in meetings
- Avoid the use of acronyms