

STATE OF ILLINOIS

Transforming Early Childhood Education

SESSION ONE TAKEAWAYS



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TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Project Process: Engagement Activities



SESSION ONE
Understanding the System



SESSION TWO
Future Framing



SESSION THREE
Prototyping



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Session One: Understanding the System

ChiByDesign sought to identify connections between families' and providers' stories and the systems and policies that influence those experiences. Our process included:

WORKSHOP PLANNING & DELIVERY

ChiByDesign designed and facilitated a **2.5 hour workshop with 17 co-designers** to develop an understanding of the current context for providers and families with young children.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

ChiByDesign convened parents, providers, intermediaries, State personnel, and other key stakeholders to build relationships as we initiate the co-design process.



Key Learnings

1. **Ecosystem navigation and service accessibility.** Parents are often uncertain about navigating the ecosystem—where to start, what resources are available, etc. Information and services overall are often difficult to access and utilize.
2. **Informed decision-making.** Parents often don't feel they have the appropriate knowledge to make informed decisions about their children's education and development.
3. **Provider learning.** Providers currently face a workforce shortage of qualified early childhood educators, affecting their sustainability.



Key Challenges

1. **The need for cross-system collaboration.** Parents spend burdensome time, energy, and labor determining which agencies can provide them with the resources their families need and completing the necessary paperwork to receive them.
2. **Lengthy enrollment processes.** The enrollment process can be lengthy, time-consuming, and costly to parents.
3. **Quality assurance.** Parents seek programming that will meet their child(ren)'s unique needs; however, high turnover, disruption in interventions, and limited slots impact the quality of services.
4. **Mental health supports.** There is a great need and desire for mental health services for both parents and providers to combat personal and professional challenges.



SESSION ONE TAKEAWAYS

Key Challenges

5. **Parent-provider dynamics.** Breakdowns in communication and the lack of trust create tensioned relationships between parents and educators.
6. **Resource distribution.** Uneven distribution of resources, knowledge, and access for rural towns and urban cities leads to gaps in services and care.
7. **Learning and development for diverse learners.** Gaps in the current early childhood ecosystem impact the experience of children who are diverse learners, complex medical needs, etc.
8. **Sustainability.** Multiple funding sources have varying funding regulations, magnifying the challenge for providers to maintain sustainability.



SESSION ONE TAKEAWAYS

Key Opportunities

1. Better inter-state collaboration between state and local providers and other public agencies (e.g., transportation, medicare).
 - a. Simplifying redundancy in processes (parents and providers completing different forms seeking the same information)
2. Fostering trust and relationships between educators and parents.
3. Simplifying and streamlining providers' funding sources reduces the need to meet various funding regulations.
4. Better enabling parents and children to utilize the supports and services available to them by increasing access to transportation.



TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Session One Post-Survey Results

92%

felt fully comfortable sharing their thoughts and perspectives with the group

92%

thought that this was a good use of their time



Session One Post-Survey Feedback

I really appreciate having my voice as a parent being heard, and I truly did feel my opinion was valued in this group. As a parent and not a professional in this field that is a wonderful feeling.

— CO-DESIGNER ONE

This was a great session to get everyone talking. I really appreciated that they had parents, providers, and other state workers on the call because at times it feels that programs are created without the voice of the ones that it affects.

— CO-DESIGNER TWO



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Preparation for Session Two

To ensure a successful engagement for session two, these are the next steps for ChiByDesign:

WORKSHOP PLANNING & DELIVERY

ChiByDesign will design a **2.5 hour workshop for 17 co-designers** based on key takeaways from session one. In this session, co-designers will imagine how the new agency should serve providers, parents, and children.

CO-DESIGNER LOGISTICS

ChiByDesign will send invitations to those who participated with session two details, expectations, etc.



Q + A



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