

Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introductions** (10 minutes)
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** (5 minutes)
 - Refer to *Minutes* document
3. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** (45 minutes)

Review the background information in the box below and discuss the two questions that follow.

Background

At the September meeting, subcommittee members agreed to read two papers to inform the discussion in October:

1. Start with Equity: 14 Priorities to Dismantle Systemic Racism in Early Care and Education -- <https://childandfamilysuccess.asu.edu/cep/initiatives/start-with-equity-14-priorities-dismantle-systemic-racism-early-care-education>
2. Advancing Equity (NAEYC): <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/equity>.

Those papers are attached to the meeting invitation. The paragraphs most relevant for today's discussion are:

On the Start with Equity report, Item 6: "Explicitly include equity in the definition of quality across rating systems". From page 10:

STATES AND TRIBES SHOULD

- ✓ Ensure their QRIS and similar quality initiatives include equity indicators at every level (see page 7 for examples) and provide targeted funding to support programs in meeting such indicators, especially programs serving historically marginalized communities and programs that have historically had less access to systemic resources, including family child care and other home-based providers.
 - From page 7:
EXAMPLE EQUITY INDICATORS FOR STANDARDS, MONITORING, AND RATING SYSTEMS
 - a) Required training on the history of race, anti-racism pedagogy, and anti-bias approaches for all staff, starting at orientation and at least quarterly thereafter.
 - b) Ongoing coaching and professional development on anti-racism pedagogy and anti-bias approaches.
 - c) Culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and equity grounded curriculum and pedagogy.
 - d) Curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, and family engagement linguistically accessible to families.
 - e) Curriculum and pedagogy are delivered in a dual-language model if more than a third of children share the same home language.

- f) Bilingual lead teachers and other staff, if DLLs are served.
 - g) Assessments are culturally responsive, strengths-based, and conducted in children’s home language.
 - h) Prohibition on harsh discipline and exclusionary practices.
 - i) Ongoing disaggregated data collection and analysis to identify and rapidly address disparities.
 - j) Policy on family engagement includes eliciting input from families on programmatic operations, stresses parent- teacher partnerships with an emphasis on relationship building to support children’s learning, and promotes family wellness and leadership.
 - k) No segregated or self-contained classrooms by funding stream that result in racial/ethnic, language, disability, or socioeconomic segregation.
 - l) Continuously tracks and addresses racial and other forms of workforce compensation inequity.
- ✓ Use flexible federal funds intended to increase the quality of services to implement targeted state/tribal technical assistance, workforce development, and new policies to support more equitable systems.

On the NAECY report, the Recommendations for Public Policy Makers, page 11, #3:

- **Revise early learning standards to ensure that they reflect the culturally diverse settings in which educators practice.** Provide ongoing, in-depth staff development on how to use standards in diverse classrooms. Quality rating and improvement systems should further the principles of equity across all aspects of education, including curriculum, instruction, full inclusion, family engagement, program design, and delivery.

Discussion

Question 1: **Based on the resources described below, are there additional standards or new approaches we should incorporate in our draft framework?** (The draft framework is attached, including previous items concerning equity highlighted in yellow, and new items suggested at our September meeting in red font.)

Question 2: **Would we like to make recommendations for other parts of the quality system, such as data collection and feedback from system users, targeting of support services and/or funding, etc.?**

4. **Report on Montessori discussions** (10 minutes)

- Eligible Montessori programs: AMS Pathway to Continuous School Improvement
- ERS score discussion – follow-up discussion
- Gateways recognition of Montessori administrator credentials: Take new look at alignment with the Illinois Director Credential requirements.

5. **Gold Plus standard on Continuity of Care** (10 minutes)

The current draft says, in the Teaching & Learning domain for Gold Plus, “Keep infants and toddlers with the same teaching team from birth through age two.” Donna Emmons asked if this standard is realistic, given current funding and staffing issues. The Early Head Start standard says, “A program must minimize teacher changes throughout a child’s enrollment, whenever possible, and consider mixed age group classes to support continuity of care.”

- Should we change what we have drafted, or leave it and develop more flexible indicators, or should we let it stand as is?

6. Approval of Framework basic elements (20 minutes)

The restructure of the Early Learning Council will take effect in 2022, and we do not yet know how ExceleRate discussions will be included. So, we want to finish the work of this Subcommittee by passing along the basic principles and structure of our work – recognizing that further discussions about the details are needed. (See Agenda item 7 for a list.)

We propose approval of the following statement:

The ExceleRate Subcommittee of the Early Learning Council recommends the attached *Draft Revised ExceleRate Framework for Child Care Centers and Schools* dated _____ as the basis for broader stakeholder review and implementation planning. The principles and structure for a new ExceleRate Illinois framework are described in the Overview on Page 1, with detailed requirements drafted on Pages 2 – 7.

The draft Framework strengthens requirements for Continuous Quality Improvement but recognizes that adequate staffing is required for programs to meet those requirements. Therefore, it aligns the requirements with public funding streams, including the new ExceleRate Child Care Center Pilot. All public funding streams are currently under-funded to support quality on a broad scale, and continued growth will be required.

The Subcommittee also re-affirms its earlier recommendation that technical assistance, consultation, and coaching need to be coordinated among the state agencies and aligned with these standards. The Subcommittee has published an inventory of supports, along with recommendations. The Early Learning Council Executive Committee approved the general recommendations at its meeting on April 1, 2019.

7. Next steps

At this point, GOECD is considering the following next steps:

- a) Some loose ends on the Framework are identified in the footnotes. Tom will follow up with the appropriate people.
- b) Further discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will be structured. Subcommittee members have suggested that the review include unaffiliated parents and teachers, including parents of children from Priority Populations.
- c) We will ask ISBE and DHS to discuss and review the draft.
- d) We will ask the full Interagency Team (State Agencies) to review the draft.
- e) The Early Learning Council (Executive Committee and full council) will review and approve a final document.

A further step will be to review how our state and federal systems can provide support for implementing the new standards. In 2019, the subcommittee completed an inventory of public supports for CQI, including recommendations. Updated recommendations and plans will be required.

8. Final Subcommittee meeting

If we need an additional (final) meeting, we could go back to the time previously scheduled for Friday, December 3, 10:30 – 12:30. At this meeting we could get a report on the ExceleRate Pilot, wrap up any loose ends, and look back on more than 3 years of work. A restructured Early Learning Council will begin work in 2022.