

## Illinois Early Learning Council Access Committee Meeting Minutes

Illinois Action for Children  
4753 N Broadway Ave, Chicago, IL 60640  
(Bridgeview Bank Building)  
**\*\*\* 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, Large Conference Room \*\*\***

January 16, 2019 • 11am-1pm

### Welcome and Introductions

- Maria Whelan, Marquinta Thomas, Kelly Cox, Tola Alao, Vicky Hodges, Tracy Occomy Crowder, Concepcion Escobar, Katrina Falkner, Jordan Morris, Carie Bires, Dawn Thomas, Julia Zhu, Vanessa Castro, Lettie Hicks, Maggie Koller, Janice Moenster, Liliana Olayo, Janet Vargas, Sandy DeLeon, Yolanda Williams, George Davis, Cindy Camacho, Carmen Garcia, Matt Lustbader
- 9.18.18 Minutes Approved: 2 abstentions, all else in favor

### Family Advisory Committee Proposal

- Yolanda expressed the importance of implementing a Family Advisory Committee (FAC) to her personally, and explained why she believes it is an important step for the early childhood care and education system in Illinois
- Tracy walked the committee members through the FAC proposal
  - General Membership – Geographic representation of FAC members
    - Janet raised concern about language in the executive summary on utilizing the IDPH regional state map for to ensure a balanced statewide membership – we are not working with IDPH, just using their map
    - **Consensus:** Make language clear that the IDPH regional map is being used by the subcommittee to ensure balanced statewide membership within the FAC
  - Membership Selection Process – Family member representatives should have a child/family member under 12 and some connection to or familiarity with the early childhood system.
    - There should also be two FAC mentors; Initially this will be FEIS members but eventually the proposal envisions these mentors being FAC alumni
  - FAC Representation on the ELC – At least 20 percent of the ELC should consist of FAC representatives, while two seats on the ELC Executive Committee should be reserved for FAC representatives

- Meeting Schedule and Governance – FAC will meet quarterly. Initially the backbone agency staff will facilitate meetings, but eventually FAC members should decide their own governance and meeting facilitation process
- Backbone Agency – Public RFP will be sent out to select a backbone agency to help support and facilitate the FAC
- Specific budget items are not part of this proposal today, but there will be a need to sufficiently fund the FAC to ensure the body is effectively and equitably engaging families across the state
  - Specific discussions on the FAC’s budget will take place once the FAC proposal has been approved by the ELC and during the RFP drafting process
- Comments and Questions on the Proposal
  - Jordan raised a question about the implications of the PDG B-5 grant for this family engagement work and for the early childhood system more generally
    - It is probably soon to tell, but the needs assessment will hopefully help to determine that.
    - To see the actual proposal that Illinois submitted, it is posted on [Earlychildhood.illinois.gov](http://Earlychildhood.illinois.gov)
  - Maria raised a question about why we are focusing on parents and family members of children birth to 12 because that is not typically the age range the early childhood system focuses on.
    - The subcommittee looked Michigan’s statewide family engagement advisory body, which includes families with children birth to 12.
    - The purpose was to create a broad membership with different perspectives on the early childhood system
  - Maria also suggested editing the section on the relationship of the backbone agency with the FEIS to ensure the Access committee works closely with the agency to support the FAC
    - **Consensus:** “During the FAC’s first year, the backbone agency should work closely with the Access Committee and its Family Engagement Implementation Subcommittee to support and mentor the FAC”
  - Tola raised a concern about engaging parents and families from the priority population communities
    - Maria clarified that we do want to make sure that family members from these populations are adequately represented, which is in the proposal. At the same time, the goal of the FAC is to engage all families across Illinois, who have a stake in the early learning system.
- Motion to approve FAC proposal (Tracy); Katrina seconded
  - Vote to approve the proposal: 2 abstentions, all else in favor
- Next step is to take this recommendation to the ELC Executive Committee for consideration at their next meeting

## Priority Populations Recommendation

- Carie presented the background on the Subcommittee's previous priority populations work and why the All Families Served members decided to update this list
- The 2013 Priority Populations list included:
  - Children of teen parents
  - Children in homeless families
  - Children in families in poverty or deep poverty
  - Children/families with Department of Children and Family Services involvement
  - Children with disabilities, including those transitioning from early intervention to preschool or early childhood special education
  - Children in family, friend & neighbor (license-exempt) child care
  - Linguistically isolated families and families that experience significant barriers based on language
  - Children of migrant or seasonal workers
- Marquinta identified the five criteria that were used to develop the updated 2019 priority populations list
  - At Risk
  - Under-served
  - Measurable
  - Timely
  - Distinctive
- The pending 2019 priority populations list within this recommendation includes:
  - Children of teen parents
  - Children experiencing homelessness
  - Children in families in poverty or deep poverty
  - Children/families with Department of Children and Family Services involvement
  - Children with disabilities
  - Children of migrant or seasonal workers
  - Primary caregiver did not complete high school / no GED
  - Families that face barriers based on culture, language, and religion
  - Children of a parent with a disability
  - Children/families with refugee or asylee status
  - Children in families who face barriers due to immigration status
- Specific definitions for each of these priority populations is included within the recommendation
- The recommendation also includes community risk factors, which are not part of the priority populations but are closely connected. These factors will need to be properly defined in order to identify strategies for improving services on a community-wide scale, in addition to addressing barriers to services for specific populations within communities.
- The recommendation identifies action steps for state agencies to review and identify new policies, re-alignment opportunities, and data collection efforts that reflect a commitment to improve services to priority population

- The recommendation also identifies action steps for specific ELC committees and subcommittees to work alongside the All Families Served Subcommittee on improving access to early learning programs and services for these priority populations
- Comments and Questions on the Proposal
  - Kelly asked whether it was possible to align the priority populations list with the DHS special population list (includes racial and ethnic groups, LGBT people, children dually exposed to batterers and substance abuse)
    - Matt and the AFS Subcommittee will check what this DHS special population list pertains to and ensure that the ELC recommendation and the state agencies are aligned in their language and areas of focus
  - Janet asked if the definition of the parent with disabilities population includes families with mental illness and intellectual disabilities
    - The definition does include children with parents or family members with physical or mental disabilities
  - Jordan asked about the timeline of the ELC approval process and when to expect these action steps to start being implemented
    - The priority populations recommendation is not closely related to the PDG grant so the funding that Illinois received for that one year grant is not expected to be provided to implement this recommendation
    - Moving forward, the Subcommittee would hope to include strategies for implementing this recommendation in a future grant, but the first step this year is to get the recommendation approved by the ELC and then identify the various strategies and/or policy changes to employ to improve access to services
  - Janet asked whether the recommendation should ensure that children have access to outdoor safe spaces
    - Currently, a child care facility has to have 50 square feet per child of outdoor space in order to operate
  - Tracy questioned whether removing “children in family, friend, and neighbor care” from the updated list would impact services to grandparent and other FFN caregivers
    - The AFS Subcommittee felt that this population from 2013 didn’t fit the subcommittee’s updated criteria for being a distinct population. However, the updated list does include a lot of populations that would encapsulate FFN caregivers
- Motion to approve recommendation (Marquinta); Seconded (Carie)
  - All in favor

### **State Agency/Policy Updates**

- Illinois was awarded \$3.1 million from the federal PDG B-5 Grant, which is about 71 percent of what the Governor’s office requested

- As part of this grant, the Governor's office will now develop a comprehensive birth to five needs assessment for all of Illinois' statewide early childhood initiatives as well as carry out strategic planning work
  - The goal is to complete these two items by around June 2019
- Other PDG grant activities to be carried out this year include:
  - Increasing parental awareness and engagement in early childhood programs
    - The Governor's office is looking to work with a consultant or contractor to help support the work of the ELC around family engagement
  - Improving the quality and efficiency of best practice sharing in the field of early childhood
  - Planning and thinking through any infrastructure changes to improve the quality of the early childhood system in Illinois
- Comments and Questions on the PDG grant
  - Tracy asked about whether any family engagement training would be included in the planned engagement activities under this grant
    - Julia explained that at this point the Governor's office is still planning the activities and scope of projects that will be the focus of this work
- **Consensus: Access Committee and Subcommittee** co-chairs should have a conversation with the Governor's office to determine how this FAC proposal should be coordinated with this one year grant

### **General Announcements**

- Next Meeting: March 20<sup>th</sup> 11am - 1pm at IAFC