

**Illinois Early Learning Council  
Executive Committee Meeting  
June 1, 2020 - 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM**

[Join via Webex](#)

Meeting Number/Access Code: 133 455 9835

If joining by phone, dial: [312-535-8110](tel:312-535-8110)

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Jennifer Alexander, Karen Berman, Kristy Doan, Shauna Ejeh, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Dan Harris, Carisa Hurley, Jamilah R. Jor'dan, Kenya McRae, Kimberly Mann, Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Sylvia Puente, Diana Rauner, Jesse Ruiz, Linda Saterfield, Josie Yanguas, Maria Whelan

**1. Welcome & Introductions – Phyllis Glink and Jesse Ruiz (5 minutes)**

Jesse Ruiz started the meeting by acknowledging the sadness and fear all are experiencing after the recent murder of Mr. George Floyd. He acknowledged the legitimate pain in the African American community, the hundreds of years of injustice that as a nation we have not adequately addressed or reckoned with and noted that it is high time we do. Jesse asked all to engage in a moment of silence for Mr. George Floyd. Following the moment of silence, Executive Committee members were asked to share any reflections. Jesse requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Executive Committee meeting in February, the April COVID-19 Briefing, and the interim Executive Committee meeting in May. All three sets of minutes were approved as written.

**2. Restore Illinois Plan & Budget – Jesse Ruiz (15 minutes)**

Jesse Ruiz noted that as of Friday Illinois is moving into Phase 3 of the Restore Illinois Plan. We have seen a decline in fatalities, new cases, and positivity rates. Our goal is to keep moving forward, and by June 27 we could move into Phase 4. We need to continue increasing testing capacity; IDPH and Illinois public universities are taking action. Higher education agencies are working on reopening guidance for the fall. Summer school could have new guidance. Additionally, the General Assembly passed a budget. There was a \$7M increase to Early Intervention and IDHS to accommodate the State's growing caseload; level funding for CCAP; increase in federal appropriations to the child care program to allow for spending of CCDBG and CARES funding this fiscal year and next; level funding for home visiting programs at IDHS, and level funding for ECBG at ISBE. The legislature appropriated CARES funding to the Business Interruption Grant programs to reimburse jobs lost due to COVID closures. Thanks to Theresa Hawley, at least \$280M will be directed toward child care providers.

**3. Child Care Reopening Plan & Implications – Theresa Hawley (30 minutes)**

- 1. Business Interruption Grant Program (BIG Grants)**
- 2. Implications for Preschool for All, Head Start, and Other Early Childhood Programs**

Theresa Hawley presented on the Child Care Reopening Plan. She noted that for child care, Phases 3 and 4 are combined in the guidance. Fifteen percent of the workforce depends on child care to go to work, and Illinois has developed a plan to protect the industry, children, and staff; a Child Care Work Group of 80+ people supported the development of this plan. Understanding what child care system we would need in Phases 3 and 4 was very difficult. According to State and national surveys, parents were showing reluctance to come back to child care, and high unemployment levels may mean we will see lower demand or a greater demand for Family Friend and Neighbor or in-home care. Illinois is taking a gradual approach because there is so much we do not yet know about outbreaks among young children. We landed on lower group sizes, about a 25-30% reduction in group sizes. We know we will be facing dual pressures – needing more staff and having fewer people available – so we decided the classroom could be staffed by an Assistant Teacher for up to 3 hours per day. These accommodations are being made due to the unusual situations of reopening; it is important for us to communicate that as an ELC, we have always put forth that we expect to be moving toward a BA as a lead in every classroom, and that all staff are well-qualified and have an educational background and the experience to be working in the classroom.

Theresa noted that Illinois did a lot in the early days of the response to the pandemic to ensure we were keeping those providers using CCAP whole, paying all eligible days, reducing co-pays, rate increases, and allowing priority essential workers to have eligibility for CCAP regardless of income. Those supports will remain in effect through June 30, but then we will return to our regular system to shift focus from CCAP providers to all providers. The Business Interruption Grant program will support revenue losses for providers. We do not know of any other state that has used its CARES funding this way; this is a big milestone to use economic development funds for child care. Thirty percent of funds will go to communities most impacted by COVID. We are pushing for Congress to put more funding into CCDBG so we can have enough resources.

Theresa noted that we have no guidance from Head Start yet, except that they intend to support programs in following their state guidance. Illinois still needs to figure out our guidance for PFA in schools. It was noted that ISBE is working on a reopening plan with a larger stakeholder group. Theresa noted that we need a group to help us think through how we can allow more children to continue to participate in preschool moving forward because ISBE's guidance will be general for the entire school system. Names were collected from the chat box and sent to Carisa Hurley at ISBE for participation in this working group.

4. **“Reopening” Home Visiting & Early Intervention** – Diana Rauner, Gaylord Gieseke, and Ann Freiburg (15 minutes)

Gaylord Gieseke reported that since Phase 2, the home visiting, doula, and coordinated intake systems have been operating fully virtually; this is aligned with national guidance as well. The Home Visiting Task Force (HVTF) has participated in the National Home Visiting Applied Research Collaborative's Rapid Response Survey and a follow-up survey by CPRD. Family access to technology is a barrier. PPE is also a concern. Diana Rauner reported that GOECD's home visiting team has worked with the HVTF to develop

guidance for the field for each phase of the pandemic. It is recommended that Illinois home visiting continue virtual visits only through Phase 3; in Phase 4, the expectation is that we will begin to resume brief in person contacts based on individual circumstances; and in Phase 5, programs can begin in-person service delivery again. Ann Freiburg reported that Illinois still does not have any face-to-face EI services, but we are considering what supports we can give in these restrictions, trying to recognize that safety of families is most important. We are focused on continuing live video visits through the next few phases and will soon release guidance for families in need of medical or clinical services.

**5. The ELC's Role and Responsibilities in Response to COVID-19 – Phyllis Glink (15 minutes)**

Phyllis Glink conceded her time to allocate more time to the following agenda item.

**6. Racial Equity & COVID-19 – Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Karen Berman, and Sylvia Puente (30 minutes)**

Cristina Pacione-Zayas noted that as we look ahead to reopen our state we are called to be deliberate with respect to how we allocate resources, buffer the disparate impact for those who have been historically marginalized, and protect and support individuals so they can live above the level of survival. The ELC Executive Committee has had several conversations about racial equity over the past year. The recent survey to members showed several clear themes: we need to be guided by data even if data is incomplete or imperfect; we need a clear plan of action and a set of grounding questions, such as the Race Forward Racial Equity Impact Analysis questions. Sylvia Puente reported on analysis conducted by the Latino Policy Forum showing the zip codes that have the largest number of COVID cases in the State. Of the 15 with the highest incidences of COVID, most are in the Chicago region and 11 are Latinx majority zip codes. There is a lot being said about how COVID does not discriminate, but there is a very large variance in the rates of infection in communities, and a lot of that is geographically based. The Forum has not looked at this in as much depth for the African American community, but the rates are similarly high. We need to consider this as we look at protocols for reopening. Essential workers are facing a problem: do I stay home with my child or do I go to work and get paid?

**7. Q&A & Public Comments (10 minutes)**

Phyllis Glink thanked all for their participation, noting the meeting time had ended and the chat box would remain open for a few minutes in case anyone had additional comments.

**8. Adjourn**

Jesse Ruiz noted that our next meeting is currently scheduled on August 10 from 1-4pm, noting that hopefully by then we will be well into Phase 4 and will have greater clarity on what is happening in education settings across the state. The meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting:**  
Monday, August 10, 2020  
1:00-4:00pm