

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

FY17

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

Letter from the Co-Chairs _____	3
Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development _____	4
Early Learning Council Committee Reports _____	7
Access Committee _____	7
Quality Committee _____	9
Integration & Alignment Committee _____	11
Home Visiting Task Force _____	16
Appendix _____	20

LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Dear Early Learning Council Members and Stakeholders,

In this year, the Early Learning Council has guided and supported extraordinary progress toward our vision for a “continuous and strong, high-quality early learning system...”. We would like to thank all active members of the Early Learning Council and its committees for their hard work and effort.

This year marked the close-out of the Race-to-the-Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. With that culmination, we celebrated over 16,000 teachers receiving early learning credentials, and more than 59% of center and school-based programs receiving Circles of Quality above licensing in ExceleRate. The QRIS Validation Study was completed and confirmed that ExceleRate is indeed a valid system for rating and improving quality!

The ELC’s committees have made significant contributions to the capacity of the early childhood system this year. The Quality Committee worked in partnership with the Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth, developing recommendations relative to SB1829 and toward increasing the numbers of bilingual/ESL early childhood teachers. The Integration and Alignment Committee provided considerable input and guidance toward a framework to ensure that the Early Childhood Block Grant targeted children with the greatest needs. The Home Visiting Task Force launched Universal Newborn Screening. And the Family Engagement Committee worked to produce a set of recommendations, adopted by the Executive Committee, which will empower family voice in the ELC.

This year our membership faced enormous challenges but through all of this, the Early Learning Council has persevered with determination and the unshakable will to collaborate across all boundaries. We are optimistic about the future of our youngest children because of our progress toward building a system that supports them well.

Phyllis Glink
Executive Director, Irving Harris Foundation
Co-Chair, Early Learning Council

Emily Bastedo
Senior Advisor to the Governor
Co-Chair, Early Learning Council

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) works with the Early Learning Council to lead the state's early childhood systems-building by coordinating the strategic vision, advancing system knowledge, and promoting system congruence and equity, so that every young child develops to their maximum potential and thrives with the support of families and communities.

RACE TO THE TOP - EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE WRAP UP

Race To The Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funds were used to provide more than \$400,000 in Gateways Scholarships among other things. The QRIS Validation Study was completed. Review committees have been established to ensure state department and private partner review and input into recommendations for additional studies and continuous quality improvement of ExceleRate. At the end of RTT-ELC, ExceleRate Illinois exceeded its goals for participation of center-based and school-based programs with 59% of all programs receiving Circles of Quality above the Licensed level and almost 400 family child care programs receiving such ratings. The number of credentialed teachers in the Gateways Registry rose to 16,440.

MATERNAL INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING (MIECHV)

In Federal Fiscal Year 2017 MIECHV had several accomplishments:

- Provided 13,120 home visits using three evidence based home visiting models to 1100 children and 1097 families in 16 at risk communities across the state.
- 92% of the families served received a parent-child attachment assessment.
- 32% of infants were breastfed for at least 6 months.
- 93% of children under the age of 1 were screened for safe sleep practices.
- 79% received intimate Partner Violence screening within 6 months of enrollment.
- 82% of children were screened for developmental delays according to the AAP guidelines.
- 85% of mothers were screened for depression within 3 months of enrollment or delivery
- 66% of mothers received a postpartum care visit with a medical provider within 30 days after birth.

GOVERNOR'S CABINET ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH—EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE PROJECT

This cross-agency, multi-sector project focused in 2017 on building a pipeline to attract and retain qualified, diverse caregivers; providing pathways to create career opportunity and promote movement; and enhancing cross-system data collection, usage, and analytic capability. Much of the work completed under this project has directly resulted from the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant. The work capitalized on efforts already underway across the public and private sector, often united through the Early Learning Council, to address early childhood workforce development

2017 project accomplishments include:

- Initiation of a study on the turnover rate amongst license-exempt providers

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Award of over 13,000 Gateways ECE Level 1 Credentials
- Expansion of Illinois high schools offering ECE Credential Level 1 coursework from 78 to 92
- Support of development and preliminary implementation of policy changes to address teacher pipeline issues
- Award of over \$455,000 in education reimbursements to nearly 250 providers pursuing higher education
- Increase in credential awards due to outreach to current ECE Level 1 Credential holders
- Messaging and outreach to higher education faculty, advisors, and counselors to improve support to early childhood educator candidates
- Development of a performance measurement dashboard to monitor project progress in 2018
- Publication of the Illinois Early Childhood Workforce Hiring Survey Findings
- Publication of The College Enrollment and Completion Patterns of Gateways Credential Holders
- Analysis to support forthcoming publication of the second phase of the Early Childhood Matching Project
- Analysis and recommendation development to support forthcoming publication of the Illinois Innovation to Incubation report
- Project redesign in preparation for a shift into a more autonomous continuity phase of the Children's Cabinet projects in 2018

PRE-SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT-EXPANSION

Two staff were hired under the PDG: The PDG Expansion Policy Implementation Director, and the Community Systems Development Policy Director. They will be providing guidance to the PDG-Expansion in achieving its Scope of Work. OECD PDG staff also prepared for submission, along with ISBE partners, the proposal for PDG Supplemental Funding which was awarded \$1.1 million to expand implementation of the Pyramid Model for Social-Emotional Development and to build an on-line data portal for community data access.

STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR THE PYRAMID MODEL

GOECD convened a State Leadership Team in 2017 with 28 stakeholders representing multiple sectors and agencies involved in Illinois' early childhood system. The goal of this team is to resolve state-level barriers and advance interagency collaboration at the state and local levels to provide resources and professional development to all early learning educators.

Since convening this team, Illinois (supported by ISBE, DHS, and Head Start funding) has also achieved the following milestones:

- Trained 50 practitioners as trainers in the Pyramid Model in May 2017, and 25 to fidelity on the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool.

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Training have been scheduled for the 2017-18 year across the state in Preschool For All Programs, Head Start and Childcare communities.
- Developed a mission, vision, goals and outcomes for the Pyramid Model in Illinois.
- Created four workgroups to meet Benchmarks of Quality Communication, Professional Development, Implementation and Data.
- Identified as the 31st partner state with the International Pyramid Model Consortium
- Connected with the Mental Health Partnership to build continuity and capacity in the state.
- The Statewide leadership team has monthly meetings. Attendance has been at 76% or higher.
- OECD & ISBE have committed to the initiative and have hired a Project Director for Pyramid Model Implementation since 9/2017.

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTER-AGENCY TEAM

GOECD convenes the Inter-agency Team (IAT) which is responsible for providing a confidential space for representatives of state agencies to share and align approaches across early childhood funding streams, consider and interpret recommendations of the ELC and GOECD, and determine how to operationalize initiatives that sit across more than one agency. The IAT, convened monthly, is working on a state-wide plan for implementation of PA100-105, the bill to prevent suspension and expulsion in preschool and child care settings. The IAT is working to assure alignment of rules and procedures between ISBE and DCFS Licensing; aligning data systems for reporting as required by the legislation; and creating cross-system guidance including common definitions, transition planning, resource identification, and communications.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

GOECD is providing leadership on several other initiatives including:

- Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee—making recommendations to the legislature per HJR24.
- Multi System Trauma Informed Collaboration—a project on cross-system developmental screenings supported by OJJDP, Chapin Hall, and American Institutes of Research
- BUILD State Team—working to bring a racial equity lens to the work of the Early Learning Council.

Access Committee

The Access Committee's goals are to increase access to high-quality early learning programs for children, families, and communities with the greatest need and to support early learning programs that are serving the highest need families and children. The work is primarily focused in two subcommittees: All Families Served and Principles & Practices. A third subcommittee, Family Engagement, was created in January 2016 and completed its work in June 2017. The priority areas for the Access Committee and its subcommittees work focus on continuing to strengthen the work in identifying and supporting priority populations in early learning programs, strengthening family engagement practices and supports, and identifying best practices in community engagement.

Accomplishments:

- Created guidance for early childhood providers to support families who are refugees, immigrants, and undocumented or have mixed immigration status families. Expertise was provided by the Center for Childhood Resilience at Lurie Children's Hospital, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and the Latino Policy Forum during the development of the guidance. It has been translated from English to Spanish, Mandarin, and Arabic and distributed through the multiple listservs. It is currently posted on the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development's website.
- Focused on identifying the new challenges being faced and the potential solutions to engage with families in their communities who are fearful and isolated as a result of the xenophobic rhetoric and policies of the new federal administration.
- Collaborated with two of the Child Care Resource & Referral agencies to share information and discuss the impact of the Health & Safety and License-Exempt Monitoring requirements of the Child Care Development Block Grant.

ALL FAMILIES SERVED SUBCOMMITTEE

Accomplishments:

- Advanced the work of the priority populations through work groups that conducted in-depth research and identified best practices for engaging families experiencing homelessness, families involved in the child welfare system, and families living in poverty and deep poverty.
- Collaborated with the Inclusion Subcommittee to develop recommendations for strategies and best practices to increase quality and supply of child care for children with disabilities.
- Coordinated conversations between the Illinois State Board of Education and McKinney Vento Liaisons to identify strategies to train and support early childhood program staff who are responsible for capturing homelessness data and the program level.

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES SUBCOMMITTEE

Accomplishments:

- Developed an inventory of existing professional development trainings for early childhood providers around family engagement and engaged INCCRRA staff in a conversation about promoting trainings around the theme of family engagement in the Gateways Opportunity Registry system.
- Developed community engagement guidance to provide early childhood providers with different ideas for how they may deepen their community engagement practices to adequately serve the families and children in their programs.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE (WORK COMPLETED 6/30/2017)

Accomplishments:

- Researched and developed a framework that creates an intentional system of family engagement that supports authentic parent voice, input and feedback to improve early childhood policies and systems at the statewide and community level.

APPENDIX DOCUMENTS

You can find the Access Committee's appendix documents at www2.illinois.gov/sites/oeed/ in the "Early Learning Council" section under "Access Committee." The following documents are located there:

- Community Engagement Guidance
- Family Engagement Recommendations
- Early Childhood Provider Guidance to Support Immigrant, Refugee, Undocumented, and Mixed-Status Families

Quality Committee

The ELC Quality Committee's goal is to develop the Workforce by supporting the IOM's recommendations on educator capacity, including Center Directors and Principals, and by focusing on workforce preparation to serve linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) children. In partnership with IDHS, the committee is helping to define appropriate strategies for license exempt providers to improve quality. The Quality Committee provides support to the Children's Cabinet Early Childhood Education Workforce Development Project and works to ensure integration of shared competencies for teacher preparation in credentialing across systems.

Accomplishments:

- Made recommendations to increase the number of teachers available to community-based providers seeking to provide Preschool for All programming.
 - Created an ad hoc work group to address issues raised by Senate Bill 1829 regarding a lack of teachers available for Preschool for All providers.
 - Held six meetings to receive input, develop guiding principles and finalize proposals.
 - Presented recommendations to the ELC Executive Committee and after those were approved, conducted follow-up with key stakeholders.
- Professional standards and qualifications were aligned to include foundational knowledge of child development and early childhood education through identification and implementation of shared competencies in credentialing across systems.
 - In partnership with key entities:
 - Four-year institutions are required to embed Gateways Credential ECE Level 5 competencies (via Part 26) within teacher preparation programs by 2019.
 - Two-year institutions are required to embed Gateways ECE Credential competencies in teacher preparation pathways by December of 2017.
 - All early childhood program faculty at two- and four-year higher education institutions were invited to regional meetings and the statewide Gateways to Opportunity Higher Education Forum in April of 2017, to increase faculty pedagogy and knowledge of a competency based system of early childhood teacher preparation.
- Instructional leadership as a core competency was strengthened as a part of professional standards and qualifications alignment and ongoing professional development. The IOM's recommendations on educator capacity regarding Center Directors and Principals was used as a guide to the development and integration of Gateways IDC competencies within early childhood and teacher preparation programs.
 - In response to the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council's report, Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation, and in partnership with PDAC and IDHS, the IDC was revised to strengthen pedagogical leadership. The IDC now includes three domains: leadership essentials, administrative leadership, and pedagogical leadership.

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Workforce preparation to serve linguistically and culturally diverse (ELL) children was strengthened through the development of related coursework at community college level.
 - Community colleges have designed and are implementing coursework that leads to the attainment of the ESL endorsement to Professional Educator Licensure or that articulates to the ESL endorsement.
- The Quality Committee acted as both an advisory committee as well as support system for the Children’s Cabinet Early Childhood Education Workforce Development Project.
 - In partnership with the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD), the Quality Committee provided resources and support to the GOECD workforce development project.

Challenges:

- Supporting the coordination of state efforts to improve the early childhood workforce is an ongoing challenge.

Integration and Alignment Committee

Work to recommend appropriate changes to early childhood systems and improve coordination and integration across early childhood programs and funding streams in order to address the comprehensive nature of children's healthy development and readiness for school. The Committee will provide input and feedback on key federal and state early childhood initiatives that impact cross sector early childhood systems. It will provide leadership on systems building efforts. In moving this work forward, IAC will continue to identify external tables and other ELC Committees and Workgroups to ensure work of the Committee is informed and coordinated.

Accomplishments:

- Partnered with ISBE to inform a new framework and support success in meeting new prioritization and recommendations around the redesign for the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) re-competition. Discussion and recommendations were completed around prioritization of additional ECBG funding, ECBG risk categories & service delivery system, and geographic assessment and prioritization of communities throughout state based on risk and need. Input was also gathered in area of improvements to quality components for Prevention Initiative center-based programs, TA/Supports communities may need during application process and implementation (if awarded) and targeted strategies to meet these needs, as well as recommendations to clarify best practice for administrative rule 235.30 and what inclusion means for ECBG. They were developed in partnership with members of the All Families Served Subcommittee of the Access Committee.
- Provided leadership, with OECD and IDPH, in building an effective system for early identification and referral services for all children across all systems engaged in developmental screenings.
- Partnered with cross-ELC Committee chairs to document and elevate questions and concerns around the initial timeline for Health and Safety training requirements for CCAP providers, which resulted in an extension and change in initial requirements. Areas of discussion included: Availability and Accessibility; Unintended consequences for children/families and provider pool; and Cross-systems Impact.
- Despite being in foster care, families of children who turn three years old after September 1st were not finding placements in early childhood programs. After this issue was shared in IAC, it was then elevated and presented to the Inter-Agency Team (IAT). A small workgroup met to resolve issue. Ultimately, clarification of the policy was confirmed in writing stating that as long as a child turns three within a program year and there is an opening they can be enrolled in HS/EHS and ISBE programs. It was also clarified that programs can hold slots for 30 days. Resolution of this issue will help address challenges not only faced by children in welfare, but also children living in deep poverty and those who are experiencing homelessness. The original Head Start/DCFS School Readiness quarterly meetings have now been expanded to include ISBE funded programs and are working to include home visiting.

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Challenges:

- The state budget impasse and delayed payments impacted and will continue to impact the stability of programs serving communities and the child-serving infrastructure and systems built over years.

INCLUSION SUBCOMMITTEE

Accomplishments:

- The Subcommittee worked with IDHS, ISBE, INCCRRA, and ExceleRate to develop screening resource guides and Memoranda of Understanding forms for programs and providers to use. Currently, a webinar is being developed to increase dissemination of these guides and forms and to encourage best practice.
- The Subcommittee produced a report with recommendations to improve the Child Find data collection forms, guidance, and reports within the ISBE Child Find Project. The Child Find project has since revised their form and is now collecting and disseminating more data and has formed a new partnership with IECAM. The recommendations have also moved into a joint statement with the Data, Research, and Evaluation Subcommittee to investigate ways to further improve and scale up data collection around developmental screening.
- The Subcommittee assisted in the planning and implementation of the Illinois Developmental Screening Systems Initiative Meeting (hosted by OECD, the IL Department of Public Health, Legal Council for Health Justice, and the Ounce of Prevention Fund) that was held in December 2016. A total 53 stakeholders gathered to explore the potential for collective action to create positive change within developmental screening processes and system(s) in the state of Illinois. The stated meeting purpose was to:
 - Develop and agree to a shared understanding or vision of the purposes and importance of developmental screening
 - Understand who is doing what and where gaps may be
 - Outline feasible steps each party can take to improve systems and processes

The meeting discussion was organized to generate shared goals with an accompanying road map of the most relevant and feasible action steps to pursue in the next 12-18 months. Facilitators worked to surface tangible opportunities and/or strategies that could be compelling enough to attract funding and fill or fix identified system gaps.

- The Subcommittee assisted in the planning and implementation of the Illinois Early Childhood Inclusion Summit that was held in February 2017. The United States Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) jointly released the Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs on September 14, 2015, which was an inspiring call to action for state and local entities to ensure all children ages birth to 5 with disabilities can access inclusive, high-quality, early childhood programs. While in recent years, Illinois has made progress toward increasing access to high quality early childhood programs for children ages 0-5 through Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, Preschool Development Grants, expansion of Head Start and Early

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Head Start, and ExceleRate, we have not undertaken a proportionate expansion of inclusive early learning opportunities for young children with disabilities. This work has become more critical as Illinois has fallen behind national benchmarks – only one third of children with disabilities are able to receive services in inclusive settings compared to fifty percent nationally. The Inclusion Summit was a commitment from Illinois stakeholders to create a vision and principles for inclusion of young children in high quality early childhood program across state agencies as a first step to ensuring that policies, funding and practices support full access, participation and supports.

- The Subcommittee submitted a letter to ISBE making a recommendation to extend the Special Education Personnel Reimbursement to support early childhood inclusion. While the process was negated due to the new school funding reform legislation, conversations will still move forward with ISBE on how inclusion can be promoted within these practices under the context of the new legislation.
- The Subcommittee began drafting recommendations on how the state can address inclusion under the new requirements of CCDBG. Numerous collaborative conversations were held with IDHS and the document will be submitted up through the Early Learning Council.

Challenges:

- Lack of state funding and budget impasse has made numerous efforts stall and the provision of services scale back or end (not just a challenge within issues if inclusion and serving children with special needs).
- Through all of the above efforts, we have come to again realize the importance of obtaining child-level data, particularly around developmental screening.

DATA, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Accomplishments:

- Providing consulting support to early childhood colleagues: Together with the Inclusion Subcommittee, advanced the data recommendations on the Child Find Project on developmental screening data. Informed the Innovation to Incubation (i2I) program on the early childhood workforce as supported by the State Pathways to Implementation Project by the National Academy of Medicine. Lead the development of a state Risk and Reach report by formalizing parameters and metrics. Partnered with Illinois Action for Children to begin generating recommendations that would support local community data needs, as identified by the Innovation Zones.
- Research Agenda: Dr. Terri Sabol of Northwestern University, used the Research Agenda for the course, Crafting Child Policy. This upper-level undergraduate course required students to use questions based on the research agenda, perform research, and propose policy solutions. The projects focused on four areas: preschool attendance, early childhood mental health, workforce compensation, and quality indicators in ExceleRate. The course ended with a presentation to members of the early learning community.

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Illinois Longitudinal System (ILDS): Supported the ILDS as a thought partner and served as an avenue for feedback for the early childhood data matching project. Continue to contribute to the development of the early childhood data priority within the ILDS.

HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE

Accomplishments:

- Implementation of the ELC approved Health Recommendations has continued to move forward. Updates on progress made by organizations that were part of the development of Recommendations and served as “champions” in their content area was collected and documented. A summary chart of progress made across different health issue areas and agencies/institutions for priority health recommendations has now been completed and shared with GOECD for online publication so interested parties can monitor progress and provide updates on ongoing basis in a centralized location.
- The Subcommittee has continued to advance its new charge to strengthen the relationship between the health and early childhood provider sectors in order to promote increased awareness and enrollment in high quality early childhood programs and services. In its new iteration of work under new co-chairs, challenges/barriers health providers may experience when referring and connecting families they serve to early learning programs were identified, as well as the strategies which may help mitigate them. These were identified by the new IAC-Health membership made up of representatives from both the health and early childhood sector. Challenges/barriers identified fell into three “buckets”: Lack of Bi-directional Communication between Health and ECE providers; Limited Health Provider Capacity; Information Gap.
- In order to advance to the implementation phase under its new iteration of work, IAC-Health completed a prioritization of actionable strategies that will help mitigate identified challenges/barriers. It was agreed that during implementation, focus should fall into three major areas. In FY18, under new co-chair leadership, implementation will first focus on partnerships and strategies specific to MCOs.

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Accomplishments:

- Finalized glossary of community systems development terms and definitions in order to develop common language that could be adopted across state agencies and throughout the early childhood system, to strengthen all stakeholders’ shared understanding of community systems development.
- Advised Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) re-compete supports process, including materials specific to community systems development and overall Technical Assistance plan.
- Reviewed and revised a local-state feedback loop process, including adding steps to the process for the intersection with the ELC and across ELC committees. Currently, CSD is in discussion with OECD on how to carry forward the feedback loop approach.

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- CSD Funders ad hoc group convened to discuss coordinated approach to educating and approaching funders to support community systems work. A guide was created for educating and supporting work with funders.

APPENDIX DOCUMENTS

You can find the Integration & Alignment Committee's appendix documents at www2.illinois.gov/sites/oeed/ in the "Early Learning Council" section under "Integration & Alignment Committee." The following documents are located there:

- Revised Feedback Loop Process
- Ensuring That All Children in Your Care Receive Developmental Screenings
- Child Find Recommendations
- Community Systems Development Terms and Definitions
- Community Systems Development Guide for Funders
- Developmental Screening Helpful Resources
- Health Recommendations

Home Visiting Task Force

The HVTF is a forum for the cycle of program, policy, and research that is essential to ensuring that state and federal public policy is informed by the programs on the ground and reflects the research being conducted. Bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders representing all three of these components has greatly benefitted the home visiting system. The HVTF's vision for home visiting in Illinois is informed by this strong, ongoing collaboration.

Long-term goals of the HVTF are to expand access to evidence-based home visiting programs for all at-risk children; improve the quality of home visiting services; and increase coordination between home visiting programs at the state and local levels, as well as between home visiting and all other publicly-funded services for young children and their families. The HVTF also serves as the advisory body for Illinois' federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

The Illinois home visiting system embraces the State's early childhood vision of every child entering kindergarten safe, healthy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn. By offering services that pair families with trained professionals who provide vital information and support, high-quality home visiting programs represent an effective and efficient strategy to improve the developmental trajectory of all children, particularly those who are most at risk for poor health, educational, economic and social outcomes. These services use evidence-based, intensive, outcome-driven models that promote positive parent-child attachment; strengthen parental capacity; provide developmental screening, monitoring, and referrals; and provide linkages to community resources and services. In addition, they are culturally and linguistically responsive, voluntary, and accessible. Outcomes of these services include improved maternal and child health, reduced risk of child abuse and neglect, improved self-sufficiency, and increased school readiness. Home visiting programs are recognized as both a preventative public health strategy, and as an integral part of a continuum of early childhood services for families beginning prenatally.

Accomplishments:

- The HVTF has undertaken a number of initiatives to increase coordination and collaboration between home visiting and other systems that serve very young families, including child welfare, homelessness, and Early Intervention.
- The HVTF provided leadership to develop and guide innovative pilot projects launched in FY17 and used lessons learned to guide other projects, including the I-PPYC-HV pilot, the Illinois Family Connects pilot, and infant mental health consultation.
- The HVTF developed a process for sharing data from public and private agencies to support the sustainability of the home visiting system.
- The HVTF continued to share cutting-edge research in the field to inform improvements in practice and policy, including highlighting findings from the innovative research projects funded through the State's MIECHV competitive grant.

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- The HVTF consistently expressed the importance of building a strong MIECHV effort in Illinois, which included expansion to seven additional communities for a total of 13 and the inclusion of early childhood mental health consultation in the model. The HVTF strongly supported reauthorizing this program, including providing updates on its status, and activating members to advocate for state and federal home visiting funds.

Challenges:

- FY17 was a very challenging year for Illinois home visiting due to the lack of funding for DHS-funded home visiting programs. Many programs reduced staff and services, and some closed completely. The HVTF took a leadership role in collecting and analyzing data from the home visiting funders in order to determine the current status of the system and help to ensure its sustainability and stability.
- The Illinois home visiting system is fortunate to have multiple public funding streams. Each funding stream has a unique data system, which can make it somewhat challenging to be able to report on information across data systems, particularly regarding outcomes for families.

HOME VISITING – CHILD WELFARE / I-PPYC-HV

Goal: Increase collaboration and alignment between the home visiting and child welfare systems, recognizing home visiting as a strategy to advance positive outcomes for children involved in the child welfare system and their families, specifically pregnant and parenting youth in care.

Accomplishments:

- Identified and trained 10 Healthy Families programs and currently in the processes of training another site. The training received by each site: cross-training to understand each area of the pilot (child welfare, home visiting, infant mental health), REDCap data system entry training, and High Risk FAN training through Erikson.
- Established a referral process: TPSN identifies the youth eligible for services and talks with youth about Healthy Families, TPSN sends referral to Pilot Manager (if youth consents), pilot manager sends referral to Healthy Families program.
- Established a communication process: weekly calls to identify youth eligible for services, report on how outreach is going with HFI sites who are contacting youth, reporting on how services are going with youth in HFI services and how often data is being added to REDCAP, discuss barriers to getting youth opened or barriers to being able to have successful visits with youth who are opened.
- Early childhood mental health consultation is provided to all programs.
- Pilot has opened 18 youth in care into Healthy Families home visiting services.

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

INFANT/EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH BACHELOR'S LEVEL CREDENTIAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Create a credential for home visitors and early interventionists who have a bachelor's degree in order to support them in working with families who have mental health challenges.

Accomplishments:

- The bachelor's level competencies were drafted, cross walked, and reviewed by the group.
- Focus groups were held in the spring with program supervisors and staff to get feedback.
- The work now is focused on outlining the actual process of the bachelor's credential (application, review, acceptance, and how the cohorts will be structured and run).

UNIVERSAL NEWBORN SUPPORT SYSTEM/ILLINOIS FAMILY CONNECTS SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Offer a home visit to the family of every newborn born in Illinois, beginning with pilot sites, in order to determine their needs for support and refer them to appropriate services to meet those needs.

Accomplishments:

- Funding was secured through both MIECHV and ISBE to launch two pilot sites.
- A coordinator was hired in order to guide the development and implementation of the pilot sites.
- Two pilot sites were launched in Peoria and Stephenson Counties in partnership with local, long-standing home visiting programs and local hospitals. Services are being offered to the family of every newborn born in those hospitals and the families are then referred to all of the services from which they would benefit.
- Lessons already emerging from the pilot sites are informing discussions in the workgroup in order to improve, evaluate, and ultimately expand the program.

SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Identify and implement innovative financing strategies to enhance and expand evidence-based home visiting programs.

Accomplishments:

- Progress was made in learning more from other states and the national level about what the potential opportunities are for securing Medicaid reimbursement for home visiting.
- Committee leadership continued to engage in discussions with leadership at HFS to determine the optimal strategy for Medicaid reimbursement.
- The Committee closely monitored other opportunities to expand funding for home visiting, and to monitor the sustainability of the system in a challenging year.

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A proposal was included in the State’s application to the federal government for an 1115 Medicaid waiver to offer home visiting to families of children born with withdrawal symptoms from opioid addiction.

Challenges:

- The ongoing federal discussion over the future of the healthcare system, particularly Medicaid, has caused some uncertainty as to the feasibility of securing Medicaid reimbursement for home visiting services.

APPENDIX DOCUMENTS

You can find the Home Visiting Task Force’s appendix documents at www2.illinois.gov/sites/oecd/ in the “Early Learning Council” section under “Home Visiting Task Force.” The following documents are located there:

- Vision for Home Visiting in Illinois
- Illinois Family Connects Brochure
- Home Visiting-Child Welfare Pilot Program Concept Paper

APPENDIX

You can find committee appendix documents at www2.illinois.gov/sites/oecd/ in the “Early Learning Council” section under the committee name. The following committees have documents located there:

HOME VISITING TASK FORCE DOCUMENTS

- Vision for Home Visiting in Illinois
- Illinois Family Connects Brochure
- Home Visiting-Child Welfare Pilot Program Concept Paper

INTEGRATION & ALIGNMENT COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS

- Revised Feedback Loop Process
- Ensuring That All Children in Your Care Receive Developmental Screenings
- Child Find Recommendations
- Community Systems Development Terms and Definitions
- Community Systems Development Guide for Funders
- Developmental Screening Helpful Resources
- Health Recommendations

ACCESS COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS

- Community Engagement Guidance
- Family Engagement Recommendations
- Early Childhood Provider Guidance to Support Immigrant, Refugee, Undocumented, and Mixed-Status Families