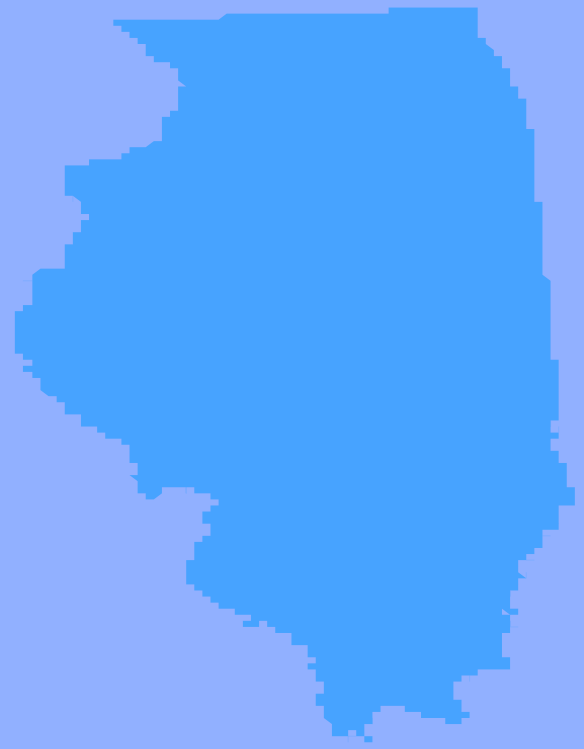
Illinois Early Learning Council

Executive Committee

August 10, 2020



Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Reopening Discussion
   - Update
   - Questions & Concerns
   - Priority Populations Discussion of Family Supports & Resources
   - ELC Research Agenda: COVID-19 Questions
3. Role of the ELC in Racial Equity Accountability for Illinois
   - Next Steps for the ELC Executive Committee & the Full ELC
   - Funding Commission Recommendations
   - Governance Structure/Access Committee Representation
4. Family Advisory Committee
5. Q&A & Public Comment
6. Adjourn

Reopening Discussion: Update

Jesse Ruiz & Theresa Hawley

Reopening Discussion: Questions or Concerns

Executive Committee Members

Reopening Discussion: Priority Populations Discussion of Family Supports & Resources

Carie Bires

Priority Populations COVID-19 Needs, Recommendations, and Survey Responses

Early Learning Council | All Families Served Subcommittee

August 2020

Background

- The All Families Served (AFS) Subcommittee shifted our focus in March to identifying, elevating, and addressing needs of priority populations and the various service providers who work directly with families during this public health emergency, as well as identifying and elevating creative solutions emerging from communities.
  - Focused meetings on the topic of COVID-19 and priority populations
  - Survey to the field
  - Memo summarizing subcommittee findings and recommendations

Biggest concerns and areas of need

- Access to food, housing and healthcare
- Unsustainability of one-time supports (diapers, toiletries, formula and other supplies)—families are very appreciative of these supports but a more predictable, long-term plan for continued provision of essential supplies is needed
- Lack of child care options
- Access to reliable internet, devices, and digital communication methods is uneven—some families and communities have better access and ability to navigate technology than others
- Access to community-based services and resources
- Greater need for mental health services, emotional and social support for families
- Safety concerns related to domestic violence and maltreatment.
- Minimal or no Early Intervention or special education services for children.
- Resources and support are very limited for many immigrant families

Concerns and needs related to early care and education programs

- Barriers to enrollment in programs for next year will increase for children and families in priority populations
- Need to better support transitions in and out of school/programs for the duration of the public health emergency
- Some parents are concerned about grade promotion when children are out of school for long periods of time with limited access to distance learning
- Limited access to quality early learning and child care

Other needs and concerns

- There is not enough information translated into multiple languages.
- Need to advocate for and connect families to resources that address their basic needs.
- Need more collaboration and coordination across family-serving systems at the community level in order to more efficiently and effectively share information and resources, and better leverage collective action to support families.
- Some families have difficulty getting safely to distribution sites to pick up food and supplies—delivery options are needed.
- Long term, it is anticipated that the number of families in priority populations will increase—a plan is needed to provide appropriate support.
- Staff burnout—many communities have mobilized and are working very hard to support families and each other, but eventually they will need more support to continue at this pace.

Examples of creative solutions

- Repurposing of School Buses
  - Food/education supplies delivery
  - Parked buses as internet hot-spots
- Staff mobilizing to make deliveries to isolated families
- Creative virtual learning experiences for children
- Individualized e-learning plans for students with special needs
- Paper copies of learning materials for families with limited technology access
- Case mgmt. by school district
- Wellness checks
- Early Learning programs partnering with school districts for distribution
- Outdoor visits, drive-by birthday parties, Zoom calls with families
- Trading supplies with other agencies
- Updating agency's social media with community resources
- Diaper and wipes distribution at food pantry
- Waiving additional fees for families
- Child care center repurposed, with provisions, as computer lab for school-age children for virtual learning.

What is working well in your community to serve families in priority populations?

- Food distribution
- Technology distribution
- Dedication, collaboration and mutual support from staff, community—”everyone is doing their best”
- Home visits, strategies for direct check-ins/regular outreach with families
- Video conferencing
- Schools and community organizations collaborating and mobilizing
- Delivery of supplies, materials
- Creativity, thinking outside the box
- Being responsive to individual needs as much as possible
- Leveraging trust already built with families
- Facebook, website communication, group texts
- Child care providers who responded seemed most pessimistic

What advice would you give state, community leaders and policy makers about how to better serve families in priority populations during this time?

- Be flexible
- Continue eviction moratorium
- Streamline funds access: fewer hoops to jump through with clear and direct guidelines
- Double down on resources—need is high, especially assistance with internet and mental health
- Prioritize students with disabilities
- Gather more input from people delivering services and those who receive service to inform policies
- Consider whole child/whole family
- Consolidate resources in one place as much as possible (such as community programs) and do more support coordination
- Consider that some children will be safer and healthier in school than out
- **Multiple calls for free internet for all**
- Provide hazard pay
- Increase funding for ECE—pay providers more, more resources like I/ECMHC, etc.

Recommended next steps

- **Webinar series:** highlight creative solutions being developed in communities that could be replicated. In the AFS meeting, one member shared that a community in the south suburbs has repurposed bus routes to deliver food, learning materials, and other supplies to families. Undoubtedly, there are many similar examples around the state that could be identified and shared.
- **GOECD website:** dedicate a portion of the COVID-19 landing page on the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development website for resources and information related to priority populations.
- **Support local organizing/coordination:** Explore strategies for empowering local entities, such as early childhood community collaborations, to take on a more formal role in organizing resources at the community level to ensure more efficient and swift access to supports.
- **Look ahead:** Leverage the AFS subcommittee and other ELC committees and subcommittees to continue considering family, program, and community needs and challenges, developing recommendations for addressing these challenges, and to look ahead to relevant recovery activities that will be essential to ensuring continued and improved services and supports for families.

Reopening Discussion: Early Learning Council Research Agenda COVID-19 Questions

Elliot Regenstein

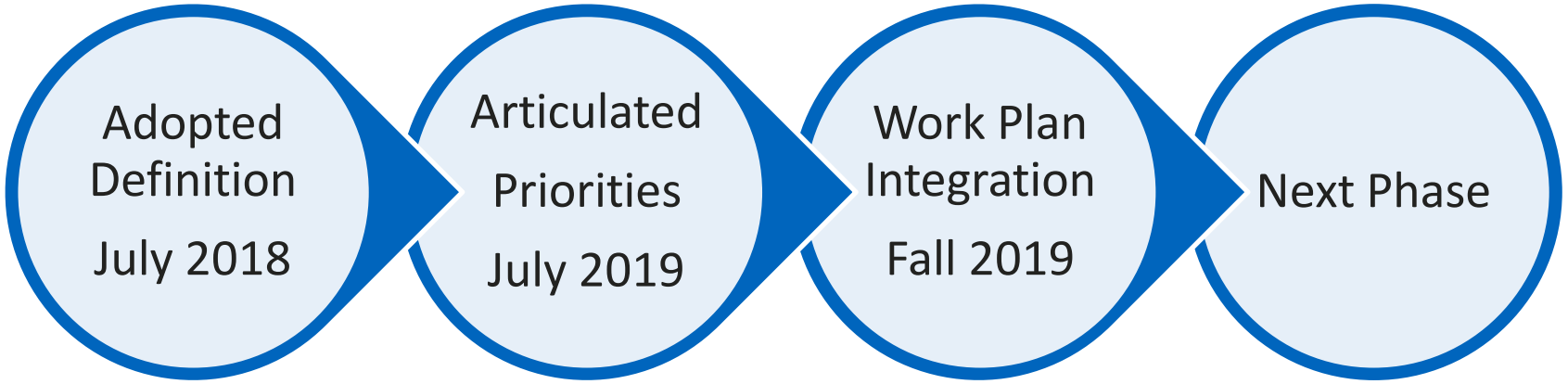
DRE COVID-19 Research Questions

- Why we had the initial conversation
- Why we're here today
- Executive committee feedback

Role of the ELC in Racial Equity Accountability for Illinois: Next Steps for the ELC Executive Committee & the Full ELC

Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Kimberly Mann & Jamilah R. Jor'dan

ELC Racial Equity Journey



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Work During the "Next Phase"

- During the December 2019 and February 2020 ELC Executive Committee meetings, the BUILD Team posed the following questions to members for discussion:
  - What are the ways we can ensure that racial equity, in principle and process, is advanced regardless of who is at the table?
  - Is the current structure of the ELC advancing our desired goals and outcomes, and if not, what does it need to be?
  - To what extent are we satisfied with how the ELC Executive Committee is currently organizing itself and its structures to advance racial equity in the current EC system?
  - What does the ELC Executive Committee need from the BUILD Team to move this work forward?
  - Does the ELC Executive Committee want to function like a Racial Equity Oversight committee, or build one out like the structure of the Oregon model?

Survey to the Executive Committee

Sent to Executive Committee Members in February 2020

Summary of Results:

- Be action oriented
- Be informed by the data
- Hold ourselves accountable to the data (though it is imperfect)
- Periodically revisit the data to ensure our decision-making has made a positive difference
- Develop a Racial Equity Data Dashboard (IECAM, PDG B-5, Risk & Reach)
- Utilize adapted Racial Equity Impact Assessment
- Offer professional learning opportunities on anti-racist education
- Intentionally create space for beneficiary voice

So what? What will be different?

Proposed Actions

Professional Learning Scope and Sequence

- Meaningfully integrate beneficiary voice (inclusion and justice)
- Setting a baseline and expectations for developing anti-racism framework and racial equity (ongoing learning)
- Racial healing training and circles (personal and interpersonal)

Disciplined Use of One-Pager

- Definition
- Priorities
- Questions

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So what? What will be different?

Proposed Actions

Racial Equity Webpage on GOECD Website

- Institutional memory of journey
- Resources

Align and Advance IL Early Childhood Strategic Plan

- Use ELC and subcommittees to support
- Develop a Racial Equity Data Dashboard (IECAM, PN3, PDG B-5, Risk & Reach)

PDG B-5 Strategic Plan

- **Strategic Focus 1:** Access—Expanding Accessibility and Equity to ECCE Services
  - **Needs Assessment Finding:** Access to high-quality ECCE services is not uniform across the state.
- **Strategic Focus 2:** Coordination—Enhancing Coordination and Collaboration Across Multiple Types of ECCE Services
  - **Needs Assessment Finding:** A challenge to system integration and interagency collaboration is a lack of consistency in data reporting and collection.
- **Strategic Focus 3:** Quality—Improving the Quality of ECCE Services
  - Needs Assessment Finding: Access to high-quality ECCE services is not uniform, and no standard definition is used for quality across ECCE services in the system.
- **Strategic Focus 4:** Workforce—Addressing Recruitment, Retention, Compensation, Equity, and Professional Development of the ECCE Workforce
  - **Needs Assessment Finding:** There is a need to attract and retain qualified staff, as well as provide more extensive training, professional development, and preparation to educators and providers to improve quality and racial equity.

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Illinois Early Childhood Dashboard

Racial Equity Metrics

- Race and ethnicity (number and percentage) of children (birth to 5) enrolled in early childhood programs by program type (i.e., PFA, Prevention Initiative, Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care, Home-visiting)
- Race and ethnicity (number and percentage) of children (birth to 5) enrolled in early childhood programs by geography (e.g., county, zip code)
- Race and ethnicity (number and percentage) of the early childhood workforce by program type
- Race and ethnicity (number and percentage) of the early childhood workforce by job categories (e.g., home visitors, assistant teachers, lead teachers, etc)
- Workforce compensation delineated by race and ethnicity
- Percentage of early childhood programs with a Gold ExceleRate rating with written policies to improve access for underserved racial and ethnic populations to services
- Percentage of Early Learning Council state committees with written policies to improve access for underserved racial and ethnic populations
- Percentage of Early Learning Council state committees with written policies to improve involvement of advocates and/or entities representing underserved racial and ethnic populations

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Beneficiary Voice

3 Goals: Project HOPE

- Consider how individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, and identities experience programs, services, regulations, and policies designed to benefit young children and their families within the state early childhood system state.
- Develop experiences with populations and groups that experience racial inequities and disparities, increasing the focus on institutional and structural barriers to achieving equitable outcomes for children and their families.
- To support exploration of how historically and today, individuals and communities have fought back, resisted, and organized for self-determination, inclusion, and fairness.

What are we listening for?

- Listen for what families' goals are for their young children,
  - what services work or don't work well,
  - what services exist that they can't access, and
  - where services and opportunities just don't exist.
- Consider the definition of access as awareness, affordability, accessibility, availability, accommodation, and acceptability.
- How do the available services align with the needs of the family and what are the barriers to access?

“They just want to be heard…and that can be hard for big institutions.”

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Virginia Julion –FIMR

Role of the ELC in Racial Equity Accountability for Illinois: Funding Commission Recommendations

Phyllis Glink

Role of the ELC in Racial Equity Accountability for Illinois: Governance Structure/Access Committee Representation

Phyllis Glink

Access Committee Co-chairs

We are seeking

- Two Co-Chairs
  - One public sector
  - One private sector
- Diversity in representation
  - Geographic
  - Racial/ethnic

Competencies

The ideal candidate is:

- Familiar with the ELC & the Access Committee
- Skilled at managing team dynamics
- Experienced at building partnerships between stakeholders and populations served
- Partial and objective
- Sensitive to the feelings and ideas of members
- Adept at fostering an inclusive environment
- Able to make time to effectively manage the Committee and oversee the work of its Subcommittees

Access Committee Co-chairs

Qualifications & Requirements

Candidates must:

- Reside in Illinois
- Be familiar with Illinois' early childhood systems, including but not limited to:
  - Regulatory bodies, such as state agencies
  - Organizations that work to support the early childhood workforce
- Have experience working with parents/family groups or community advocacy bodies
- Be sensitive to the needs of families
- Have experience supporting the needs of *priority populations*
- Have proven dedication to addressing racial disparities and inequities in early childhood systems
- Have the ability to prioritize the workplan of the Access Committee while overseeing the workplans of its Subcommittees

Access Committee & Subcommittee Charges

Access

The **Access Committee** seeks 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.

All Families Served

The **All Families Served Subcommittee** seeks to serve more of the highest need children in high-quality early childhood programs.

Family Engagement Implementation

The **Family Engagement Implementation Subcommittee** is committed to addressing systemic racial inequities that exist throughout Illinois. The central goal of this Subcommittee is to establish an early childhood advisory body made up of the parents and family members that reflect the varied racial, religious, cultural, geographic, and economic diversity that exists across our State.

Family Advisory Committee

Jamilah R. Jor’dan & Maggie Koller

Family Advisory Committee

Jamilah R. Jor'dan & Maggie Koller

ELC Executive Committee Meeting – August 10, 2020

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Where We Were

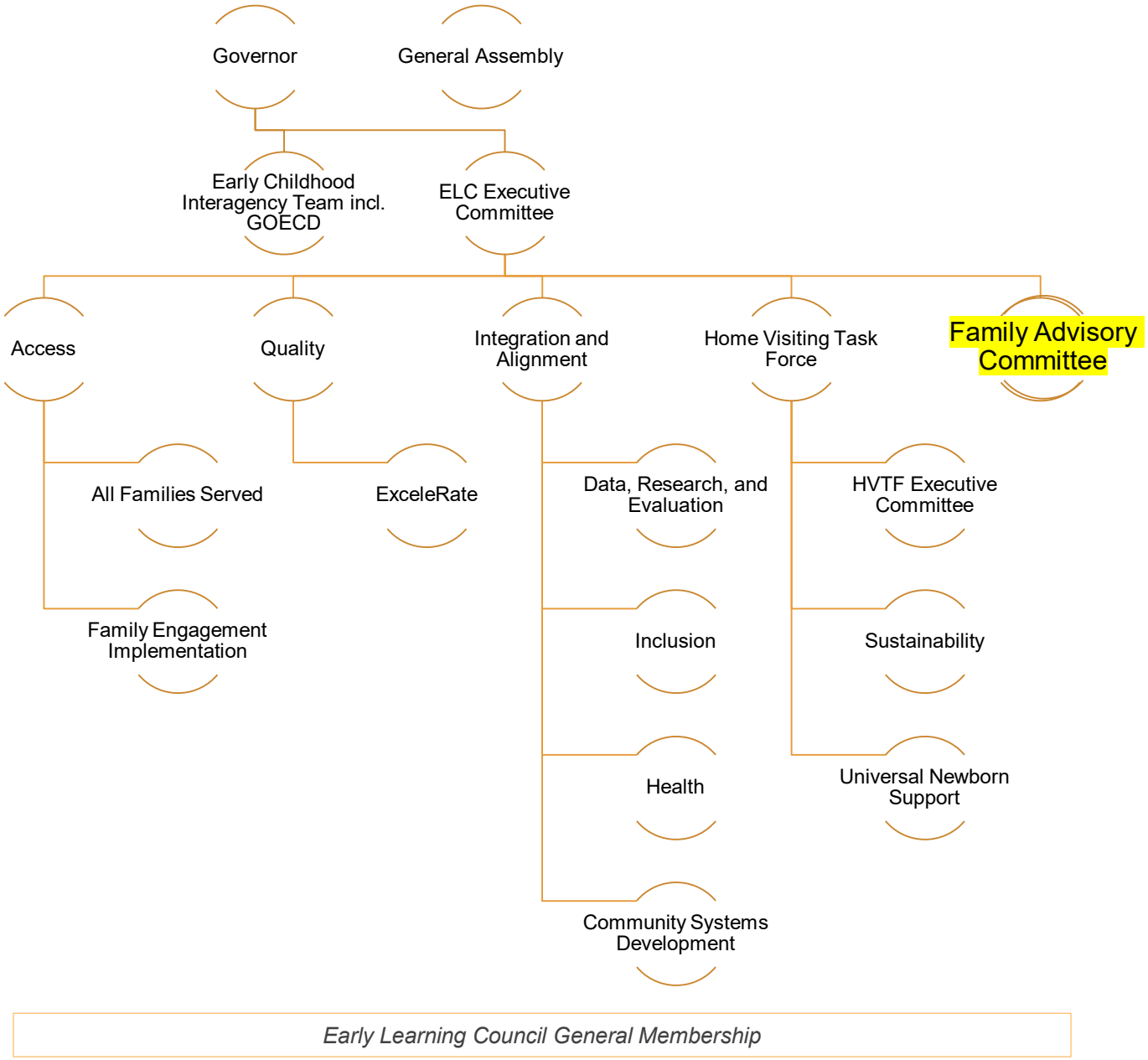
Family Engagement Implementation Subcommittee (FEIS)

Formed in 2016 with the goal of creating recommendations for an intentional system of family engagement within the ELC

As originally proposed, FEIS would dissolve once the FAC is officially formed

Proposal: Family Advisory Committee (FAC)

ELC Structure



Goals of the Family Advisory Committee

- Providing family voice to guide early childhood policy development and issues
- Advising on issues that impact the early childhood system
- Promoting state-level family engagement and inclusivity of parents in the decision-making processes at the full ELC and ELC Executive Committee meetings
- Recruiting new family leaders to engage in the Committee
- Collaborating as needed with the other ELC Committees on cross-committee work

ELC Approval & PDG B-5 Funding

June 5, 2017, the proposal for the FAC was approved by the ELC Executive committee

The proposal, at that time, included 3 phases

Hold due to inability to identify funding for the development and support of the FAC

GOECD was able to identify funding for the Committee and its development through the PDG B-5

2019 – Planning/2020 Implementation

Where We Are

Family Advisory Committee

Iris Hildreth, GOECD Family Engagement Manager

Illinois Action for Children as the backbone agency

Applications are out and recruitment efforts will be taking place through August 21st

Next Steps

Member selection, trainings, and orientations are planned for Fall 2020

16 representatives + 2 co-chairs (one public/one private) that will sit on full ELC & Executive Committee

Original proposal 20% ELC family representation; full membership decreasing to 65, efforts will be made to designate seats for parent representatives

Orientation and training for the ELC

Need to discuss sustainability

Questions?

Q&A and Public Comment

Adjourn