

OFFICE OF THE
MAYOR



EVERY CHILD READY CHICAGO

2024
Strategic
Framework



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Letter from Mayor Brandon Johnson

Dear Friends:

I am proud to stand with our partners to launch the **Every Child Ready Chicago (ECRC) Strategic Framework**. This three-year plan is vital to ensure that Chicago's youngest residents have equitable access to the early childhood programs and resources they need to thrive. The work we are undertaking together will build the foundation for a healthier, safer, and more equitable Chicago for generations to come.

My administration's policy priorities of mental health, community safety, housing and homelessness support, youth and economic development, and human rights, including arts and culture, are deeply intertwined with the goals of the Early Childhood Strategic Framework. Research is clear that experiences and relationships during a child's earliest years, starting prenatally, greatly influence their life trajectory. Positive experiences and relationships during these years lead to a strong foundation for positive health and well-being while negative experiences and relationships can have lasting detrimental impacts. Given that the first three years of life represent the most critical developmental period in the entire lifespan, it's equally critical that we get it right for children from the very beginning.

We know that mental health support and services play a vital role in early childhood development. Through investments in trauma-informed mental health services and the expansion of supportive environments for our youngest residents, we are setting a stage for lifelong emotional health. We are also working to prevent and reduce cycles of violence through initiatives and programs such as the People's Plan for Community Safety. By supporting families and children, especially in neighborhoods most affected by systemic inequities, we can help prevent cycles of violence and offer pathways to a brighter future.

As the next generation of Chicagoans, it is vital early childhood programs not only support our youngest residents but also serve as critical investments in our economic future. We know that high-quality early learning leads to improved educational and employment outcomes which will benefit our workforce and economy in the long term. By expanding access to these programs, we are ensuring that all children will have a strong start. And we are working to support unhoused families through programs like Rapid Re-Housing and continued investments in housing support ensuring that every child can grow up in a safe and secure home.

We also know that every child deserves the opportunity to explore their creativity and cultural identity. That is why we are dedicated to fostering inclusive environments where culture is integral to early childhood education, helping our children to express themselves and celebrate their diverse heritage. These priorities will ensure that our children, no matter their background or circumstances, have the support they need to grow into their fullest potential.

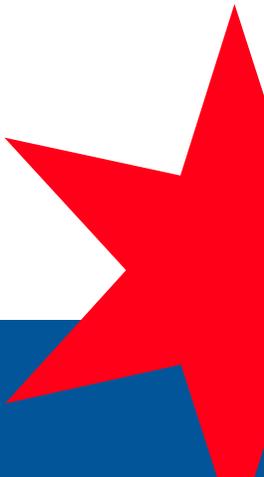
This Strategic Framework is about building a future where **EVERY** child has the resources needed to thrive, and their families are supported by well-resourced communities and comprehensive, high-quality programs. Together, we can transform Chicago into a city where equity and opportunity are the bedrock of our children’s growth and success. I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you as we continue our efforts to build a better, stronger, safer Chicago for every child and family.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brandon Johnson', written over a white background.

Mayor Brandon Johnson
City of Chicago





Letter from Co-chairs

At the core of our mission lies the firm belief that every child in Chicago deserves access to high-quality early childhood programs and comprehensive support services. We are dedicated to continually bridging the needs of families with the opportunities the early childhood ecosystem can address. This mission propels our collaborative efforts, which bring together stakeholders from the City Agencies, community-based agencies, providers, families, philanthropic partners, labor unions, and other local collaborators. With this collective of valuable partners, Every Child Ready Chicago (ECRC) is well-positioned to build a stronger prenatal to five ecosystem.

Central to our approach is the empowerment of family, provider, and community voices. We recognize the invaluable insights and experiences they bring in shaping effective early childhood programs and support services. By amplifying their voices, we strive to champion programs that cater to the diverse needs of all Chicago families while striving towards “building a better, stronger, and safer Chicago.” Our strategic framework, aligned with the priorities set by the Chicago Mayor’s Office, focuses on essential areas such as co-governance, human rights, equity, inclusion, health, human services, education, and economic vitality. By aligning our efforts with these City priorities, we ensure that our initiatives are impactful, sustainable, and inclusive.

Grounded in a foundation of equity, we set out to develop our first strategic framework to help us outline our priorities, actions, and performance measures. This plan encapsulates our shared vision and concerted efforts.

While this three-year framework serves as a guide, we acknowledge the dynamic nature of our city and pledge to adapt our focus to maximize community impact. We remain committed to adjusting our strategies in response to feedback, policy changes, and evolving needs to maintain relevance within the Chicago landscape in the years ahead. This inaugural strategic framework aims to realize the vision of seeing every child in Chicago thriving within well-supported families, effective programs, and well-resourced communities.

Together, let us embark on this journey to create a future where every child in Chicago has the opportunity to thrive.

Candace Moore

*ECRC Executive Committee Co-chair
Chicago Mayor’s Office*

Carie Bires

*ECRC Executive Committee Co-chair
Start Early*





CHICAGO'S EARLY CHILDHOOD LANDSCAPE



INTRODUCTION

Importance of the Early Years

The first five years of life represent the most critical period of development in the entire human lifespan with much of a child's life potential determined by how their brains, bodies, and relationships develop during this time. During these crucial early years, the brain develops rapidly with nearly 1 million new neural connections formed every second.

All children develop in the context of relationships and their experiences. Positive experiences and relationships during early childhood build a strong foundation for future success in school and in life, while challenging experiences and relationships can have negative impacts on health and development that persist into adulthood.

Fortunately, we have many opportunities to positively shape development through access to early care and learning programs. Research shows that high-quality early learning programs have long-term positive effects on cognitive and social-emotional development, including the ability to regulate emotions and develop social connections, which can last through kindergarten and beyond. Communities that build a strong early care and learning system that supports all children and families are investing not only in a child's future, but in the future of the community as a whole.



CHICAGO'S EARLY CHILDHOOD LANDSCAPE

To better understand what it takes to support families in raising healthy, thriving children in Chicago, it is important to have a clear picture of who they are and what community factors are at play. This requires a hard look not only at the strengths and assets of families and communities, but also at the significant barriers that fragmented and inequitable systems present.

CHICAGO IS HOME TO
2.7 MILLION PEOPLE

21% of Illinois children reside in Chicago

- Chicago is home to -
1/3 of all Latinx children ages 0-4 in the state
Nearly 1/2 of all Black children ages 0-4 in the state

182,150 children are under the age of 6

8% of households speak a language other than English

compared to 4% statewide (1)

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN CHICAGO

- households with children -

\$73,200

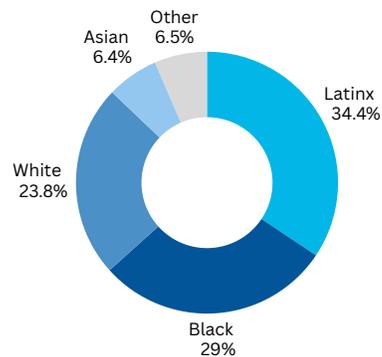
Illinois median - \$95,900 (5)

38% of children live in households with a high housing cost burden (4)

Nearly **7,000** children under 5 live without health insurance (6)



CHILDREN AGES 0-5 IN CHICAGO BY RACE/ETHNICITY (2)

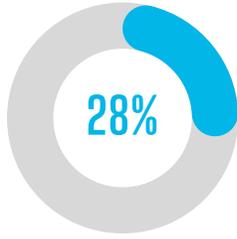


22.8% OF CHILDREN AGES 0-5 IN CHICAGO LIVE IN POVERTY (2)



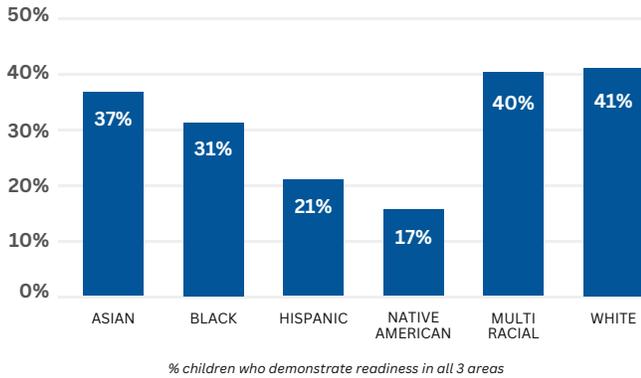
CHICAGO'S EARLY CHILDHOOD LANDSCAPE

LESS THAN **1/3** OF CHILDREN ENTERING KINDERGARTEN WERE "READY FOR SCHOOL"

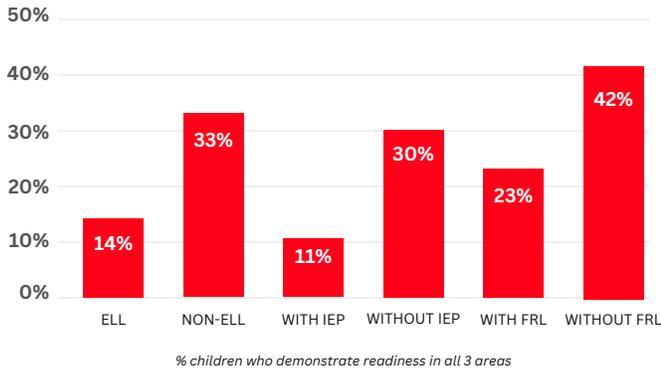


KINDERGARTEN READINESS

BY RACE/ETHNICITY (2022)



BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER, IEP, & FREE & REDUCED LUNCH STATUS (2022)



(13)



MORE THAN 1 IN 3 WOMEN

in Chicago do not receive adequate prenatal care

12% OF BABIES ARE BORN TOO EARLY ⁽⁸⁾

9.6% OF BABIES ARE BORN WITH LOW BIRTH WEIGHT ⁽⁹⁾

2X

Black women experience pregnancy-related deaths at a rate **twice as high** as that of white women ⁽¹¹⁾

INFANT MORTALITY RATE IN CHICAGO

6.4 PER 1,000

deaths per live births ⁽¹⁰⁾

3X

The infant mortality rate for babies born to Black women is **2.59 times greater** than for those born to white women ⁽¹²⁾

CHICAGO'S EARLY CHILDHOOD LANDSCAPE

Chicago's mixed-delivery system of early care and learning functions within the context of the broader Illinois early childhood system, with only some funding streams and programs fully governed by the City of Chicago. The system includes a full range of early care and learning programs that serve children and families prenatally through age five.

Chicago's early care and learning programs and services are primarily funded through state and federal funding streams. Primary sources of federal funding include Head Start, the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV), and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C (IDEA Part C) program. Primary sources of state funding include the Illinois Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), Illinois Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and the Maternal Child Home Visiting program. As of September 2024, state-funded programs in Illinois are administered across several state agencies, including the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. In spring of 2024, Illinois created a new unified early childhood agency called the Illinois Department of Early Childhood and it is anticipated that most programs currently administered in other state agencies will transition to this new agency by state fiscal year 2027.



CHICAGO'S MIXED-DELIVERY SYSTEM



PRENATAL TO AGE 3

FAMILY CONNECTS CHICAGO

The Chicago Department of Public Health supports parents post-birth by providing follow-up home visits and linking them to essential services.

EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING PROGRAMS

Evidence-based home visiting programs, including doula-embedded options, support expectant parents and families with young children.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Early Intervention supports children under three with disabilities and developmental delays.

BIRTH TO 5

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES & CHILD CARE CENTERS

Family child care homes and centers offer early education and care for children from birth to school age.

PUBLICLY FUNDED CENTER-BASED PROGRAMS

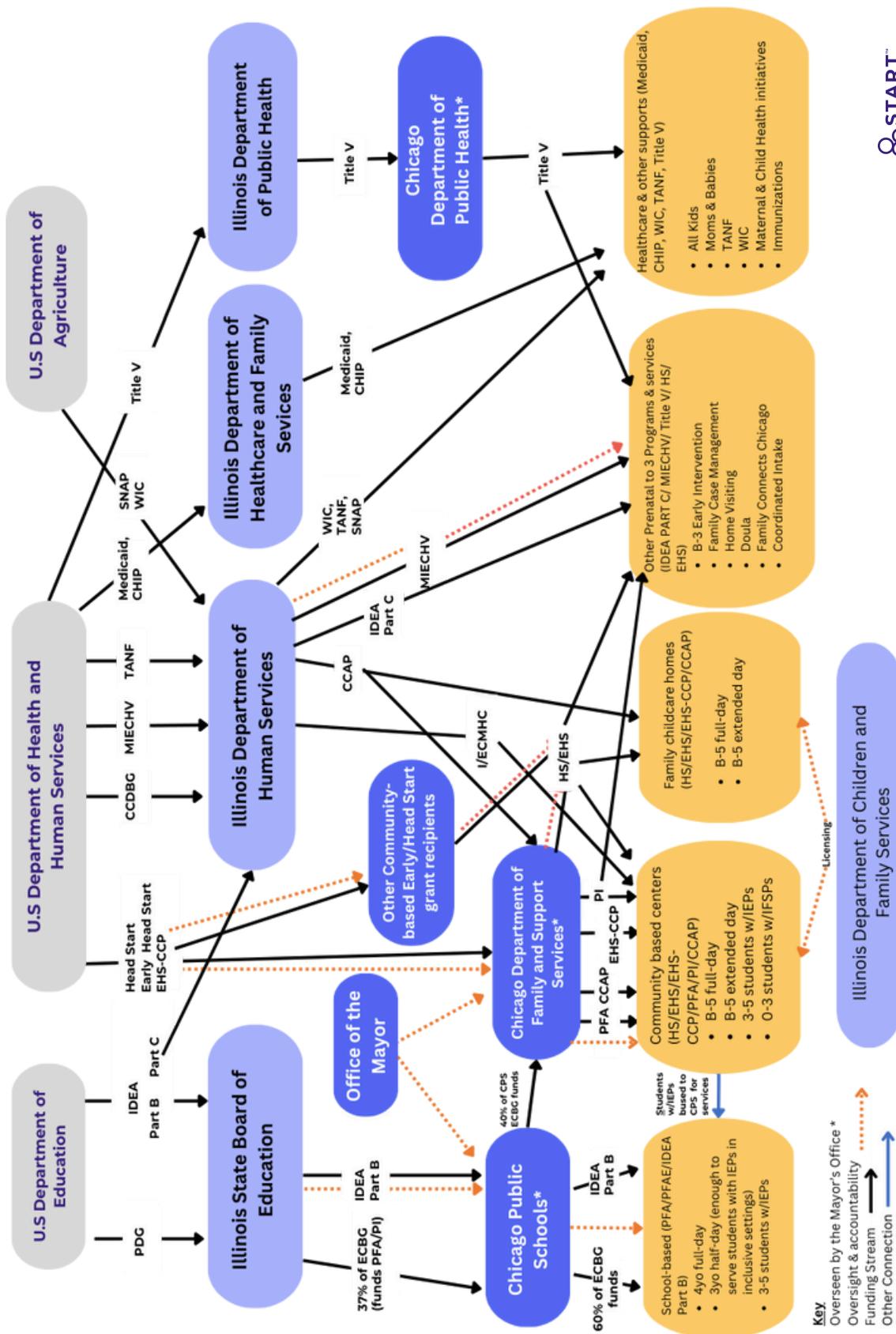
Publicly funded programs like Early Head Start, Head Start, and community-based preschools serve children from birth to five.

AGE 3 TO 5

SCHOOL-BASED PRESCHOOL

School-based preschool primarily serves four-year-olds, with limited half-day slots available for three-year-olds.

CHICAGO EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS MAP



CHICAGO'S EARLY CHILDHOOD LANDSCAPE

continued...

Early care and learning programs in Chicago are administered and implemented by a variety of public agencies, nonprofit organizations, small businesses, and other community organizations and institutions. Due to limitations of current state and local early childhood data systems and the practice of blending and braiding multiple funding streams to create more full-day, full-year, high-quality early childhood programs, it is not possible to know exactly how many unique children are served or how many total slots across all funding streams and programs are available at any given time. We can, however, estimate the number of children served and report on funding levels in each program. The most precise details are available for programs funded by Early/Head Start and the Early Childhood Block Grant.

Chicago has ten Early/Head Start recipients, four of which only receive Early Head Start funds. Of the ten total recipients, nine are nonprofit community-based organizations and one is a public agency, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS). Early/Head Start accounts for nearly 40% of all publicly-funded slots in the city, with DFSS holding the highest number of slots.

Per state law, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) receives 37% of the annual appropriation of the state Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), which funds two programs: Preschool for All (PFA) and Prevention Initiative (PI).

PFA is a preschool program for three and four year olds that can be delivered in either school or community-based settings. PI is a program serving birth-three year olds and can be delivered as a center-based or home visiting program. Each year, Chicago Public Schools uses some portion of its Early Childhood Block Grant funds, along with other district funding, to support school-based preschool and transfers remaining funds to DFSS, which, in turn, distributes funds to community-based organizations to operate PFA and PI programming.

CHICAGO’S EARLY CHILDHOOD LANDSCAPE

continued...

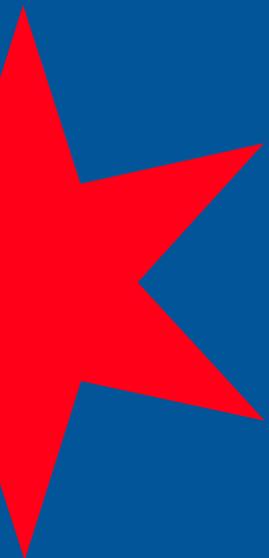
In addition to state and federal funding, the city of Chicago also dedicates local funds (“corporate fund”) to support early care and learning programming and system infrastructure.

The primary infrastructure initiative in Chicago is called Chicago Early Learning (CEL). CEL is an initiative co-led by the Chicago Mayor’s Office, Chicago Public Schools, and the Department of Family and Support Services. Its purpose is to provide access to early childhood education options prenatal to five, through both CPS and community-based organizations. Primary functions of CEL include citywide marketing of early learning programs and services, family outreach and engagement through parent ambassadors, strategic communications, and support for local early childhood community collaborations. CEL also operates a website which provides program information and houses an online application for Early/Head Start and PFA/PI funded programs, as well as a hotline to support families in navigating the system.

Other programs and infrastructure initiatives supported with city funding include the Chicago Early Childhood Integrated Data System (CECIDS), the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship (CELWS), Chicago Public Library early childhood programming, and Every Child Ready Chicago.







EVERY CHILD READY CHICAGO



ABOUT EVERY CHILD READY CHICAGO

Recognizing the critical role of early childhood in the overall health and well-being of the community, Chicago has developed a robust and comprehensive mixed-delivery system of early care and learning programs that serve thousands of children and families every year. Chicago has a long history of leveraging federal, state, and local resources to ensure its youngest residents have access to the early childhood supports and services they need to thrive.

Building upon Chicago's robust history of investing in early learning opportunities from birth, Chicago launched Every Child Ready Chicago in 2019 in order to streamline and unite the city's prenatal-to-five systems and support services under a unified vision of equitable access to early childhood programs for all Chicago families. The Every Child Ready Chicago (ECRC) Advisory Committee was established in 2022 to serve as a home base for early childhood systems building in Chicago. The ECRC Advisory Committee, which is co-led by the Mayor's Office and Start Early, convenes a diverse group of stakeholders to advise city agencies on priorities and activities related to building a strong early learning system, to provide a space for transparent and timely sharing of information and resources, and provide a platform for supporting collaboration across the early childhood community in Chicago. ECRC also formalized a partnership with Birth to Five Region Illinois 1-A in 2022, which ensures alignment and collaboration across both efforts to maximize impacts.

In 2023, with the election of Mayor Brandon Johnson, the Every Child Ready Chicago Advisory Committee began working in earnest to co-design a strategic plan for implementation of a strong system that ensures equitable access to quality services and positive outcomes for all children. Under the leadership of the ECRC Executive Committee, a review of relevant historical documents and activities was conducted, along with a series of new activities and engagements, all aiming to identify strategic priorities that were both responsive to the needs and desires of Chicago's early childhood community and most ripe for action and progress. The Committee also worked to identify priorities surfaced from the early childhood community that were aligned to Mayor Johnson's priorities.

In recognition of the continued dynamic landscape, including major shifts at the state level on the horizon, the Executive Committee opted to create a strategic framework, rather than a strategic plan, to provide more flexibility for ECRC to be responsive as new opportunities and challenges arise. Read on for an overview of how the strategic framework was developed and a summary of findings from key activities and engagements that informed the priorities and actions identified within.

OUR MISSION

Build a coherent prenatal to five system that provides equitable access to the supports and services families need

OUR VISION

Promote equitable access to early childhood programs for all Chicago families by expanding the availability of seats and enhancing support services

OUR VALUES

Equity

Prioritizing resources for families who have been most impacted by systemic inequities

Diversity & Inclusiveness

Ensuring that stakeholders across all roles, identities, and interests have a voice in decision-making

Transformation

Partnering with families and communities to reimagine a stronger, more equitable early childhood system that brings lasting change

Transparency

Building trust through communication and a clear decision-making process that prioritizes children and families

Accountability

Establishing clear roles, time-bound actions, and measurable benchmarks as evidence of progress to be shared with the community



OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members of the Executive Committee, entrusted with overseeing the work, have the duty to drive the progress of the ECRC collaborative through strategic leadership and direction. This diverse committee includes child care providers, parents, philanthropic partners, advocates, and city/state representatives to ensure comprehensive representation of the Advisory Committee. Their goal is to maintain the sustainability, accountability, and community responsiveness to the Advisory Committee and broader Chicago landscape.



Anita Andrews-Hutchinson
ITAV Family of Schools



Candace Moore
Chicago Mayor's Office



Carie Bires
Start Early



Carmen Garcia
Irving Harris Foundation



Dr. Carrie Comer-Yates
Chicago Public Schools



Cerathel Burgess Burnett
City of Chicago



Cindy La
Chinese American Service League



Destiny Ortega
Crown Family Philanthropies



Edna Navarro-Vidaurre
Birth to Five Illinois Region 1-A



Latanya Cray
Primo Center



Leslie McKinly
Chicago Public Schools



Lisa Radcliffe
Parent



Madeline Shea
Chicago Department of Public Health



Marquinta Thomas
Illinois Action for Children



Mykela Collins
Parent



Melody Benjamin
SEIU Healthcare



Roberta Hansen
Illinois Department of Human Services



Rosario Hernandez
Latino Policy Forum



Ruth Kimble
Austin Childhood Providers' Network ECE



Talibah Moore
COFI

TIMELINE



2020

- ECRC launches as a public-private partnership led by the Mayor's Office with support from Start Early
- The COVID-19 pandemic hits

2021

- ECRC Working Group produces the Initial Landscape Summary & Strategy Map
- ★ The number of Head Start grants awarded is increased in Chicago
- ★ Early Childhood Leadership vacancies occur in the Mayor's Office & Chicago Public Schools

2022

- Partnership launches between ECRC & the Birth to Five Illinois Region 1-A
- ECRC Working Group creates initial family & community engagement recommendations for ECRC
- ECRC secures Technical Assistance support to develop a strategic framework & support meeting facilitation
- ECRC relaunches as an Advisory Committee
- ★ Mayor's Office announces new Early Childhood Leadership

2023

- An Executive Committee is established for ECRC
- ★ Mayor Brandon Johnson is elected into office
- ★ The Mayor's Transition Plan is initiated in Chicago
- ECRC creates a Stakeholder Directory
- ECRC conducts an analysis of the Mayor's Transition Plan, the initial ECRC Strategy Map, and Birth to Five Region 1-A Scan
- ECRC hosts its first-ever Early Childhood Town Hall Meeting
- State of Illinois announces a plan for the creation of the Department of Early Childhood
- ECRC facilitates a series of community listening sessions for the Early Childhood Block Grant



DEVELOPING THIS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



OUR DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Since its inception as a working group in 2020, ECRC has evolved through significant milestones, shaped by stakeholder input and community needs. Operating within its current Advisory Committee structure since late 2022, ECRC developed a strategic framework that reflects the diverse perspectives and insights gathered from numerous engagements. These inputs, particularly from families, community-based organizations, and providers, have been instrumental in refining the framework and guiding the collaborative's work groups moving forward. As ECRC continues to adapt to feedback, this framework serves as a tactical guide for addressing policies, funding, and critical community needs.

HOW THIS FRAMEWORK WAS DEVELOPED



ROOTED IN COMMUNITY NEED

The initial ECRC landscape analysis, developed in July 2021, laid the foundation for determining strategic direction. This analysis was tested through a series of community-facing events and activities between January 2023 and January 2024, which helped identify and prioritize key elements for the strategic framework. A summary of the inputs and learnings is provided in the following pages.



INVITED FEEDBACK & REFINED

A thorough review process followed, allowing both the Executive and Advisory Committees to shape and refine the strategic priorities and actions. This iterative process, conducted through a series of engagements between February and June 2024, led to adjustments in the strategic direction for ECRC over the next three years based on the feedback received.

KEY ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

Below are notable events and actions led by the Every Child Ready Chicago (ECRC) team in 2023. These activities provided crucial insights that influenced the strategic direction and actions within this framework.

MAP EARLY CHILDHOOD ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES



In February 2023, the ECRC Advisory Committee mapped the focus areas and priorities of member organizations to those identified in the ECRC Initial Landscape Summary and Strategy Map. The result of this work was the ECRC Stakeholder Directory – a resource to support connection and awareness among providers, City and State leaders, and local organizations who share priorities and focus areas. The directory identifies stakeholders focusing on the areas of Access, Quality, and Family & Community Engagement and was shared with all ECRC Advisory Committee members. This early mapping activity provided crucial insights into the strengths, interests, and areas of focus among ECRC stakeholders that built on the ECRC Initial Landscape Summary and Strategy Map and in turn, informed the ECRC strategic framework areas of focus. The directory, found in the Appendix, contains nearly forty partners and resources. Moving forward, the ECRC Executive Committee will oversee an update of the directory to be in closer alignment with the new strategic framework, ensuring it is accessible to the community.

CROSSWALK THE MAYOR'S TRANSITION PLAN



The Every Child Ready Chicago Initial Landscape Summary and Strategy Map was crafted in 2021 following a series of gatherings involving various stakeholders. This report aimed to offer insights to aid in the formulation of a strategic plan for ECRC. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategic planning process was postponed. In early 2023, ECRC regained momentum by relaunching the Advisory Committee to engage with community leaders passionate about early childhood education. Before initiating the strategic planning process that began in early 2024, the ECRC Executive Committee conducted a deep review of Mayor Brandon Johnson's Transition Plan to ensure alignment with the new administration's vision. Mayor Johnson and his team crafted this Transition Plan to gather community feedback and understand the city's needs at the outset of his term. The ECRC Executive Committee worked together to thoroughly review each plan, pinpointing areas of alignment, and identifying key early childhood gaps as potential opportunities for the ECRC or other City Agencies to address. After careful review, the Committee devised a crosswalk, documented in the Appendix. This analysis was finalized in July 2023, and areas of alignment have been incorporated into the action plan of this strategic framework and will guide the future focus of ECRC.

KEY ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

HOST AN EARLY CHILDHOOD TOWN HALL MEETING



On September 26, 2023, ECRC achieved a noteworthy milestone in response to community feedback by hosting its first-ever Early Childhood Town Hall. The goal of the town hall was to share information about the current state of the early childhood system in Chicago and gather input and questions from the local early childhood community. This initiative directly aligned with ECRC's strategy to foster collaboration with City and State Agencies, and insights from the event underscored the need for ECRC to take a more proactive role in facilitating spaces for City Agencies to disseminate information to families. The event featured comprehensive funding overviews presented by City and State Agencies, followed by a distinguished panel comprising guests from various institutions, including the Mayor's Office Chief of Staff, Office of Early Childhood with Chicago Public Schools, the Department of Family and Support Services, Children Services Division, the Chicago Department of Public Health, City Colleges of Chicago, and the Illinois Department of Human Services. More than two hundred community members and stakeholders attended, actively participating in an engaging discussion fueled by their questions. ECRC was able to seize this opportunity to extend invitations to community members to join the Advisory Committee. Feedback shared during the event informed additional stakeholder engagement related to the administration of the Early Childhood Block Grant (highlighted below).

FACILITATE COMMUNITY-FOCUSED LISTENING SESSIONS



In December 2023, the City of Chicago partnered with the ECRC Executive Committee and a third-party consulting group, CoSpero Consulting, to facilitate inclusive discussions aimed at gathering feedback on the Early Childhood Block Grant. A diverse group of current, past, and potential funding beneficiaries participated, totaling nearly 60 attendees. Additional input was collected through a pre-session questionnaire, which received feedback from 66 providers. Insights from these engagements highlighted tangible opportunities for the Early Childhood Block Grant administering agency to enhance accessibility, provide greater support to providers throughout the grant process, and implement measures to further enhance equity. Following these discussions, the City of Chicago, alongside CoSpero Consulting, analyzed the input received and conducted additional reviews of the current funding processes, using that information to develop recommendations to address concerns raised by stakeholders.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

WHAT WE LEARNED THAT INFORMED THIS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Several themes emerged from the feedback generated across the many activities, engagements, and review of prior initiatives.

First, early childhood stakeholders in Chicago reflected that the early childhood system in the city, just as it is at the state level, is **complex and difficult for families and providers to navigate**.

Additionally, stakeholders shared that there are **not enough resources dedicated to early childhood programs and services and that existing funding is not equitably distributed**. We heard significant concerns raised about the early childhood workforce and an urgent need to increase compensation and improve working conditions through strategic use of limited funding.

Given the significant role the state plays in funding and administering early care and learning programs and services, we also heard a strong desire for **greater alignment and collaboration with the state** to ensure the unique needs and desires of Chicago families, providers, and communities are addressed.

Stakeholders also shared **how difficult it is to find and interpret early childhood specific data**, and that lack of comprehensive, aligned data systems made it difficult to ensure responsible use of data in policy and programmatic decision-making.

Chicago stakeholders were clear that more could be done to **center family, community and provider voices in decision-making about the city's early care and learning programs**, and that there is a need to better engage, include and connect existing parent and community groups, whose lived expertise is key to informing a more responsive and effective array of early childhood programs and services.

Finally, stakeholders shared a need for **more early childhood-specific information and resources** to support the early childhood workforce in better meeting the needs of families, help families navigate the early childhood system and support their children's learning and development, and educate community members, leaders, and decision-makers about the early childhood ecosystem.

In response to these themes, we organized the ECRC strategic framework around five key strategic priorities:

- 1) *enhancing funding equity & local governance*, 2) *increasing access to early childhood system data*, 3) *strengthening state-city collaboration & alignment*, 4) *bolstering family & community engagement*, and 5) *advancing quality early childhood training & tools*.

In our ongoing efforts to address the needs of young children and their families, we have recognized the growing urgency to prioritize mental and behavioral health resources for children and families, particularly in the wake of the pandemic. Recent data and community feedback highlight the increased need for these services. Mayor Johnson's commitment to expanding mental health investments over the coming years, coupled with Birth to Five's recent regional mental health assessment and recommendations, underscores the importance of this focus. We are committed to building stronger collaborations to support the early childhood ecosystem and ensure mental health needs are not overlooked.

In selecting these five strategic priorities and associated strategic actions, we also considered the roles that ECRC and the city of Chicago plays in the early childhood system, existing work being carried about by other coalitions, groups and the state of Illinois, and the opportunities and limitations of the current landscape. Our goal was to maximize impact by focusing on issues and actions that are most closely aligned to the challenges and priorities reflected in the themes identified through community engagement and where ECRC can uniquely lead or contribute.

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

STRATEGY FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT

Early childhood needs are constantly evolving, and our framework is designed to be adaptive rather than attempting to solve every current issue. Instead, it lays the foundation for a collaborative, responsive approach to continuous improvement. The strategic priorities and actions identified are those that ECRC is uniquely positioned to address, and were shaped by insights from recent engagement activities, as outlined in the previous section. These priorities will be implemented through working groups over the next three years.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2024-2027

1 Enhance Funding Equity & Local Systems Governance

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Create a revised cost model for Chicago that accurately reflects the true cost of delivering high-quality programs and services to families, as well as ensuring favorable working conditions for early childhood providers to inform more equitable funding allocation and assist in planning for the sustainability and growth of the workforce pipeline
- Map the financial resource flow at the city level and create strategic recommendations for the City to improve funding transparency for the community
- Research local early childhood system governance models and identify implications for Chicago

2 Increase Access to Early Childhood System Data

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Expand data literacy training, resources, and related tools to educate families, system leaders, and communities on the early childhood data ecosystem
- Establish standardized data collection and reporting norms, encompassing indicators, terms, metrics, and equity considerations, to unify reporting on the city's children across sectors

3 Strengthen State-City Collaboration & Alignment

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Collaborate with designated State Agencies to establish bidirectional sharing of information and updates with the ECRC network
- Generate recommendations for City and State systems enhancement and alignment

4 Bolster Family & Community Engagement

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Identify engagement strategies to effectively center and elevate family and community voice within ECRC
- Build bridges with parent and community groups to ensure ongoing bidirectional communication and partnership for shared decision-making

5 Advance Quality Early Childhood Training & Tools

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Establish a repository of up-to-date resources and information for providers in key areas to better serve families
- Create a training series for families on early childhood system topics that are tailored to their needs
- Produce tools, trainings, and events to educate community members and leaders about the early childhood ecosystem



ACTION PLAN

2024 - 2027

This three-year plan has been designed to steer the efforts of all stakeholders and highlight opportunities for growth beyond the current human resources capacity. The Executive Committee will oversee the overall plan execution while newly established work groups will handle its operationalization.

GOVERNANCE & FUNDING WORK GROUP

The **Governance and Funding Work Group** aims to strengthen collaboration between ECRC and State and City partners to improve alignment, information access, and share recommendations for funding equity enhancement.

PRIORITY ALIGNMENT	TIMELINE	STRATEGIC ACTION	KEY TASKS	WORK GROUP OUTCOMES
Enhance Funding Equity & Local Systems Governance	Year 1	Create a revised cost model for Chicago that accurately reflects the true cost of delivering high-quality programs and services to families, as well as ensuring favorable working conditions for early childhood providers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asset map available funding avenues for local governing agencies to facilitate resource exploration and research. 2. Conduct a comprehensive five-year review of past cost modeling endeavors at both city and state levels. 3. Collaborate closely with a consultant or contractor to create an updated cost model that is reflective of the true cost for meeting the needs and preferences of Chicago's diverse families. 	<p>Crosswalk previous cost modeling work</p> <p>Secure funding partner</p> <p>Insights report detailing the current cost of quality care</p>
Enhance Funding Equity & Local Systems Governance	Year 1	Research local early childhood system governance models and identify implications for Chicago	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work closely with a consultant or contractor to develop a comprehensive report outlining the governance models and their implications within Chicago's early childhood system. 	<p>Insights report detailing models and impact</p>
Strengthen State-City Collaboration & Alignment	Year 1-2	Collaborate with designated state agencies to establish bidirectional sharing of information and updates with the ECRC network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For year one, identify and document existing connections, relationships, and convening with State Agencies. 2. Develop a structured process to consistently integrate information into Advisory Committee meetings, i.e., inviting relevant partners or tasking the Work Group with consolidating and disseminating information. 3. For year two, determine key State Agencies and relevant advisory bodies to deepen relationships with that impact the early childhood landscape. 4. Identify best methods to enhance bidirectional information sharing between State Agencies and ECRC. 	<p>Relevant state ECE information shared at 100% of Advisory Committee meetings</p>

GOVERNANCE & FUNDING WORK GROUP (CONTINUED)

PRIORITY ALIGNMENT	TIMELINE	STRATEGIC ACTION	KEY TASKS	WORK GROUP OUTCOMES
Strengthen State-City Collaboration & Alignment	Year 1-3	Generate recommendations for City and State systems enhancement and alignment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a thorough evaluation of existing City and State systems related to early childhood education and care. 2. Engage with a diverse range of stakeholders to gather insights and perspectives on the current challenges and potential solutions for enhancing and aligning City and State systems. 3. Draft and share actionable recommendations for enhancing and aligning City and State systems related to early childhood education and care. 	<p>Landscape analysis of City and State ECE systems</p> <p>Recommendations report for the City and State</p>
Enhance Funding Equity & Local Systems Governance	Year 2	Map the financial resource flow at the city level and create strategic recommendations for the City to improve funding transparency for the community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with City partners to conduct an analysis of the current financial resource flow and governance within the city, including identifying sources of funding, allocation patterns, and any existing gaps or inefficiencies. 2. Engage with key stakeholders, including early childhood providers, City officials, and community organizations, to gather insights and perspectives on the existing resource landscape. 3. Develop strategic recommendations for the city to enhance the efficiency and accessibility of resources for early childhood providers. 	<p>City resource flow map</p> <p>Recommendations report for the City</p>

DATA WORK GROUP

The **Data Work Group** aims to enhance data literacy for the community and establish consistent data standards across organizations to unify data structure and accessibility.

PRIORITY ALIGNMENT	TIMELINE	STRATEGIC ACTION	KEY TASKS	WORK GROUP OUTCOMES
Increase Access to Early Childhood System Data	Year 1 - 2	Expand data literacy training, resources, and related tools to educate families, system leaders, and communities on the early childhood data ecosystem	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partner with a local organization to evaluate the existing level of data literacy among families, system leaders, and community members regarding early childhood data, using surveys, empathy interviews, or focus groups. 2. Create comprehensive training materials, resources, and tools tailored to different audience groups (families, system leaders, and communities). 3. Organize and deliver data literacy training sessions, workshops, or webinars. 4. Assess the effectiveness of the data literacy training programs through feedback mechanisms, post-training surveys, or follow-up assessments. 	<p>Insights report for data literacy training needs for families</p> <p>Data literacy training materials and facilitated sessions</p>
Increase Access to Early Childhood System Data	Year 3	Establish standardized data collection and reporting norms, encompassing indicators, terms, metrics, and equity considerations, to unify reporting on the city's children across sectors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partner with a local organization to establish the current baseline for early childhood education (ECE) data collection and dissemination. 2. Chart the standards for reporting, including detailed specifications and data origins, applicable to children in Chicago across various sectors. 3. Identify gaps in reporting, such as unsheltered families and English language learners, to pinpoint areas requiring additional attention and data collection efforts. 4. Identify cooperative initiatives to unify data standards across organizations. 	<p>Map of current ECE reporting standards and gaps</p>

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORK GROUP

The Family & Community Engagement Work Group aims to implement a strategic engagement plan, inclusive of development opportunities, for providers, families, and leaders to deepen community voice and boost understanding of the early childhood ecosystem.

PRIORITY ALIGNMENT	TIMELINE	STRATEGIC ACTION	KEY TASKS	WORK GROUP OUTCOMES
Bolster Family & Community Engagement	Year 1	Identify engagement strategies to effectively center and elevate family and community voice within ECRC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the <u>ECRC Family and Community Engagement Committee's recommendations</u> to derive relevant tactics for community engagement. 2. Examine the engagement strategies employed by local organizations and assess effectiveness. 3. Define clear community engagement objectives and methodologies for ECRC to employ. 	Community engagement plan
Bolster Family & Community Engagement	Year 2	Build bridges with parent and community groups to ensure ongoing bidirectional communication and partnership for shared decision-making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify parent groups and community organizations relevant to early childhood education and care. 2. Cultivate partnerships through joint initiatives, events, or projects that promote shared goals and objectives in early childhood education and care. 3. Actively solicit feedback from parent groups and community collaborators to ensure their voices are heard and their perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes. 	<p>Increase parent participation in ECRC to #</p> <p>Secure # parent or community group presentations for Advisory Committee meetings</p> <p><i>(Targets to be determined by the work group)</i></p>

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORK GROUP CONTINUED...

PRIORITY ALIGNMENT	TIMELINE	STRATEGIC ACTION	KEY TASKS	WORK GROUP OUTCOMES
Advance Quality Early Childhood Training and Tools	Year 2	Establish a repository of up-to-date resources and information for providers in key areas to better serve families	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather relevant materials, guidelines, and best practices on key topics such as family support for racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity, as well as disabilities. 2. Create and maintain a centralized repository or database to house these resources. 3. Continuously curate and update the repository with new resources, research findings, and emerging best practices to ensure that providers have access to the most current information. 	Provider resource repository
Advance Quality Early Childhood Training and Tools	Year 3	Create a webinar or workshop series for families on early childhood system topics that are tailored to their needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a needs assessment to identify the specific topics and areas of interest or concern for families related to early childhood systems. 2. Develop a series of webinar or workshop topics based on the needs assessment findings. 3. Organize and facilitate the webinar or workshop series, ensuring that sessions are scheduled at convenient times for families. 4. Collect feedback from participants throughout the webinar or workshop series to evaluate the effectiveness of the content and format. 	Host # training events <i>(Targets to be determined by the work group)</i>
Advance Quality Early Childhood Training and Tools	Year 3	Produce tools, trainings, and events to educate community members and leaders about the early childhood ecosystem	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perform a needs assessment to pinpoint the particular subjects and domains of interest for community members and leaders concerning early childhood systems. 2. Establish optimal methods, tactics, and timelines for promoting tools, training, and events within the community to foster extensive participation and engagement. 3. Execute various resources and initiatives. 	Training materials for community and leaders

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Candace Moore, Director of Early Learning - Mayor's Office

Gaddys Ybarra, Education Project Manager - Mayor's Office

Carie Bires, Managing Director, Illinois Policy Team - Start Early

Madison Ezell, Policy Analyst - Start Early

Rowan Atwood, Policy Specialist - Start Early

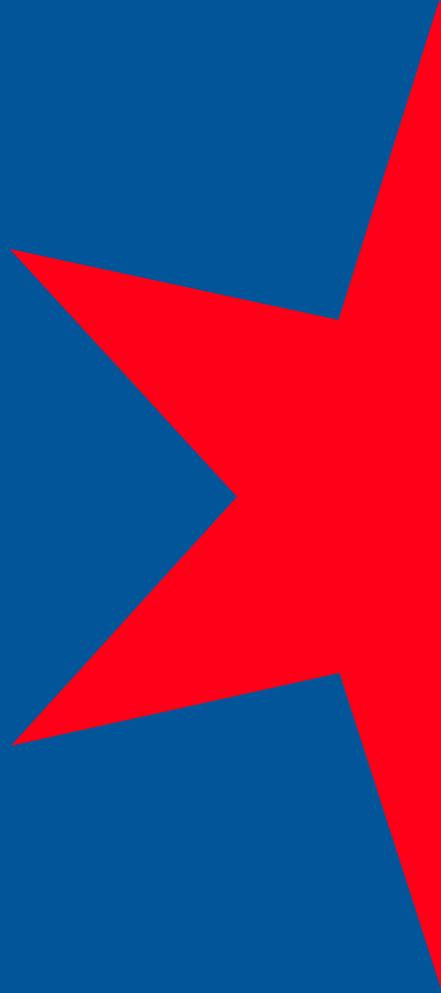
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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A MAYOR'S TRANSITION PLAN & ECRC'S INITIAL LANDSCAPE

The primary goal of this crosswalk was to identify areas of alignment between the Mayor's Transition Plan and ECRC's Initial Landscape Summary & Strategy Map. The ECRC Executive Committee conducted this analysis in July 2023.

- Report: [Transition Team Report to Mayor Brandon Johnson](#)
- Report: [ECRC Initial Landscape Summary & Strategy Map](#)

EDUCATION

Transition Plan Goal #1: Loving, liberatory, and fully staffed schools

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
<p>Communicate an informed vision of equity, and plan for its realization: Develop the vision collaboratively with stakeholders through surveys, standing advisory groups, and community meetings. Release a report on the current state of schools in comparison to the vision, with clear benchmarks for reaching new and existing equity goals, including hiring and developing more Black and Latine educators, expanding high-demand programs and supports in targeted schools (including under-enrolled schools), and meeting student and community needs for equitable and green facility investments.</p>	<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen authentic engagement of families in programming, advocacy, and leadership to fully support their children’s health, well-being, and learning Increase opportunities for culturally and linguistically responsive programming to best support dual language learners (DLLs) and children with diverse cultural experiences and strengths <p>Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the diversity of the early childhood workforce—including prioritizing BIPOC professionals in leadership positions and cultivation of bilingual community members into the workforce Advance alternative pathways to support professionals who have historically been denied access through traditional degree paths (e.g., expanding programs embedded in or linked to high school programs, “grow your own” initiatives, etc.) Strengthen the capacity of the workforce across all early childhood settings to support racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse children and families <p>Leadership and Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the role of City leadership in ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across the early childhood system (e.g., dedicated staff focused on DEI as an umbrella to early childhood work in the city)
<p>Make the expansion of the Sustainable Community Schools model a district priority, including the creation of a dedicated department within CPS. Consider how other priorities, including dual language, special education, and early childhood intersect with expansion.</p>	<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase support for kids with disabilities—from improving providers’ capacity to support children in an inclusive environment to strengthening the provision of early intervention and early childhood special education services <p>Leadership & Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen cross-system coordination between city-level agencies to meet strategic priorities for advancing the early childhood system
<p>Support newcomer students: Develop a comprehensive model that allows school communities to effectively serve newcomer students. Learn from schools already serving in this capacity, and expand resources where needed.</p>	<p>Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure equitable access by addressing disparities in enrollment and participation across race, language, and ability Address structural barriers families face to participation in early childhood programming (e.g., transportation, hours of operation, etc.)
<p>Birth-to-Five: Review the current approach to birth-to-five public service and education, and work with CPS, Sister Agencies, and CBOs to improve services and transitions.</p>	<p>Leadership & Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen cross-system coordination between city-level agencies to meet strategic priorities for advancing the early childhood system Increase connections and alignment between state- and city-level early childhood efforts Examine the role of City leadership in ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across the early childhood system Establish an ongoing advisory body to ensure a broad range of stakeholders are engaged in implementation, decision-making, and monitoring progress of the early childhood system
<p>Across provider groups: This includes bridges between community-based and district providers of early childhood services and bridges between agencies serving young people in order to expand services from birth to five.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified

EDUCATION

Transition Plan Goal #2: A just city for our students, families, and their communities

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Full implementation of the Chicago Early Childhood Integrated Data System to create integrated, real-time, comprehensive early childhood data system on every Chicago child birth to five years old that is accessible to policymakers, families researchers, and advocates	<p>Data & Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a collaborative research agenda that builds on foundational early childhood research and seeks to answer the City’s most pressing questions • Secure funding to implement the research agenda and develop communication strategies to effectively share findings with families, early childhood stakeholders, and communities • Increase the availability of higher-quality and more coordinated early childhood data—including conducting a crosswalk to inventory existing data and define new data that may be needed to advance the early childhood system
Increased coordination between CPS, Department of Human Services, Department of Family & Support Services, Head Start, Illinois State Board of Education, and Chicago Park District resulting in aligned goals and increased access to services	<p>Leadership & Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen cross-system coordination between city-level agencies to meet strategic priorities for advancing the early childhood system • Increase connections and alignment between state- and city-level early childhood efforts
Under “Bridges Left to Build”: Expand access to early childhood education: DFSS has been severely under-enrolled for years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified
Under “Bridges Left to Build”: Identify students in early childhood and get them aligned with appropriate services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified

Transition Plan Goal #3: Democratic and people power centered school governance

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Make the distribution of “Home Language Surveys” mandatory not only for CPS and Charter schools, but for anyone taking care of or teaching children 3-4 years old.	<p>Data & Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the availability of higher-quality and more coordinated early childhood data—including conducting a crosswalk to inventory existing data and define new data that may be needed to advance the early childhood system • Strengthen the use of community-level and disaggregated data to address disparities and advance equity • Advance the use of culturally and linguistically appropriate child and program assessments to improve instruction and service delivery and to address disparities, leading to more equitable outcomes
Survey and engage the public, families, community annually and report on the data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified

EDUCATION

Transition Plan Goal # 4: Progressive revenue to drive equity and fuel investment in young people

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Sustain the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarships	<p>Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase supply of early childhood educators that reflect the community they serve and understand the Chicago ECE landscape • Increase ability to recruit and retain qualified professionals that reflect the community they serve and have an understanding of the Chicago landscape

Transition Plan Goal # 5: Robust college and career programming and pipeline

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Audit, identify, and set goals for increasing Black and Brown teachers and administrators, and English Language Learner / bilingual education expertise.	<p>Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the diversity of the early childhood workforce—including prioritizing BIPOC professionals in leadership positions and cultivation of bilingual community members into the workforce
Examine and grow models such as Grow Your Own teacher and educator pipeline programs.	<p>Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance alternative pathways to support professionals who have historically been denied access through traditional degree paths (e.g., expanding programs embedded in or linked to high school programs, “grow your own” initiatives, etc.)
Provide instructor development support related to cultural responsiveness for teachers teaching Black and Latine students.	<p>Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to professional development opportunities—including addressing barriers to participation (e.g., cost, location, etc.)
Fill staffing vacancies, especially for Special Education Classroom Assistants and Child Care Assistance Program positions.	<p>Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand training for providers to enhance their knowledge and competencies in high-need topic areas, such as infant and toddler care, special education, trauma-informed practice, mental health consultation, and social supports for families • Increase compensation to ensure adequate and equitable salary and benefits for early childhood professionals
Educator / principal pool is reflective of the student body.	<p>Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the diversity of the early childhood workforce—including prioritizing BIPOC professionals in leadership positions and cultivation of bilingual community members into the workforce
Creation of full scholarships to local universities for CPS graduates seeking to become a teacher.	<p>Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve recruitment, participation, and support for navigating higher education systems (e.g., matriculation between two-year and four-year college)
Increase coordination with park districts and libraries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified

EDUCATION

Transition Plan Goal # 5: Robust college and career programming and pipeline (continued)

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Improve retention of Black/Brown educators.	Workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the capacity of the workforce across all early childhood settings to support racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse children and families
Improve pay parity.	Workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase compensation to ensure adequate and equitable salary and benefits for early childhood professionals

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Transition Plan Goal #1: Fight for policy and structural changes that transform the lives of Chicagoans

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Fight for changes in policy at the federal & state levels that guarantee access to health care as a basic human right. Advocate for universal access to health care, including parity for behavioral and dental health, that is high quality, safe, affordable, and culturally respectful personal and population health services.	Leadership & Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase connections and alignment between state- and city-level early childhood efforts
Advocate for access to fresh food, universal child care and early learning, and other basic needs to be met for every Chicagoan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified
Approach everything through an equity and anti-racist lens considering the needs of special health populations, including but not limited to older adults, people who identify as LGBTQ, undocumented residents, people whose primary language is not English, and people with disabilities.	Leadership & Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the role of City leadership in ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across the early childhood system
Highlight the role of the Chicago Board of Health as a leader in policy issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified

Transition Plan Goal #2: Realize the potential of DFSS to be a leader for the human services sector

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Developing a mission statement for DFSS. Without a mission, the default driving force becomes compliance, which only serves to bolster bureaucracy and stifle the creativity needed to make improvements. A mission statement could help improve efficiency and coordination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified
Improve communication among City departments. While many agencies offer integrated, wraparound services to meet whole people and whole families, City departments remain stubbornly siloed. CBOs have cited examples of having to tell one City department what was happening at another. Consider establishing formal linkages to improve communication, prevent duplication, and create opportunities for integration. Improved communications could also provide opportunity for convenings around topics that cross City department boundaries, such as childcare and early learning.	Leadership & Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen cross-system coordination between city-level agencies to meet strategic priorities for advancing the early childhood system
Focus on data collection and sharing. The City's unique vantage point in the human services ecosystem provides an incredible opportunity to collect data from across the sector. Prioritizing this could demonstrate valuable leadership for CBOs by helping them build from good data.	Data & Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the use of community-level and disaggregated data to address disparities and advance equity

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Transition Plan Goal #2: Realize the potential of DFSS to be a leader for the human services sector (continued)

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Lead with equity. A city with such vastly uneven outcomes requires budget priorities that are equitable in response to existing need. The robust system of care we envision can only be achieved with equity underpinning every step. The Chicago Food Equity Council can be an important partner for this effort in advancing food justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified
End poverty-wage jobs in human services. Commit to paying a living wage and investing in the wellbeing of all City workers and all workers providing city-contracted services.	Workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase compensation to ensure adequate and equitable salary and benefits for early childhood professionals

Transition Plan Goal #3: Optimize City’s role as funder by ensuring no money is left on the table

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Examine processes with an eye towards ensuring accountability and maximized use of public funds as determined by the administration’s goals. Consider how this might also work across City departments.	Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize existing dollars by creating efficiencies where possible (e.g., restructuring and simplifying funding streams, supporting braiding and blending of funds)
Consider a nonprofit partner to dispense funds. Many other cities use separate 501c3s, such as The Fund for Public Health in New York City, to dispense funds more easily to partners.	Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand funding with new dollars to support system priorities that will increase access, improve quality, advance equity, and ensure sustainability
Listen to community and delegate agencies. To ensure any efforts made are moving in the right direction, the voice of grant recipients should be considered. Organizations who offer grants of their own may especially have useful insights.	Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize existing dollars by creating efficiencies where possible (e.g., restructuring and simplifying funding streams, supporting braiding and blending of funds)

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Transition Plan Goal #4: Develop, enhance, and invest in integrated approaches to addressing the whole person

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
<p>Delineate what will be addressed through direct service and what will be executed through partnerships to ensure optimal functioning of a robust system of public care. More about this consideration is addressed in the “Bridges to Build” section.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified
<p>Consider a community info exchange. While the City need not share private data across departments when inappropriate, sponsorship of a community info exchange could help mitigate the challenges of duplicating paperwork at different departments, making it easier for residents to seek and receive care. This could be built off the current 211 system created in partnership with the County and United Way.</p>	<p>Data & Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the transparency of data and make it more accessible to stakeholders to monitor progress of the early childhood system and outcomes of children and families
<p>Consider ways to align care and delivery of services across City departments and levels of government. The challenges of whole households require holistic solutions. Explore existing models of integration and consider how they could be bolstered, supported, and expanded. Consider partnership within other City departments, like Chicago Housing Authority, the library, and others, to optimize this work.</p>	<p>Leadership & Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen cross-system coordination between city-level agencies to meet strategic priorities for advancing the early childhood system • Increase connections and alignment between state- and city-level early childhood efforts

Transition Plan Goal #5: Declare a human services state of emergency

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
<p>Make a public declaration of this crisis from the Mayor’s Office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified
<p>Stand up coordinated response systems. Like the COVID-19 war room, our human services crisis will require structures and systems to ensure communication and coordination. Focusing on our vision of a robust system of public care can help to orient these efforts in the right direction.</p>	<p>Leadership & Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen cross-system coordination between city-level agencies to meet strategic priorities for advancing the early childhood system • Increase connections and alignment between state- and city-level early childhood efforts

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Transition Plan Goal #6: Build a public health infrastructure that promotes and protects the health and well-being of Chicagoans and the communities in which they live

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
<p>Create a Chicago/Cook County Study Commission to examine the possibilities of building and maintaining a strong organizational infrastructure for public medical services and public health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified

Transition Plan Goal #7: Improve surveillance and data infrastructure

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
<p>Decolonize Data. The City should be specific in capturing data, and not lump large, diverse groups of people into generic categories. Expand beyond the “traditional” health data to include business, tax, law enforcement and other administrative data.</p>	<p>Data & Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the use of community-level and disaggregated data to address disparities and advance equity
<p>Invest in & expand Chicago Health Atlas: Merge this data with Cook County data and create opportunities for community members to understand and access this information. It must be easy to disaggregate data. Provide training for community residents, organizations, and schools to use an expanded Health Atlas.</p>	<p>Data & Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase training, technical assistance, and other supports around data literacy to build capacity of stakeholders to use data to drive continuous improvement and decision-making • Improve the transparency of data and make it more accessible to stakeholders to monitor progress of the early childhood system and outcomes of children and families
<p>Work with other local health departments and academic institutions to address the serious delays and issues with the Illinois Department of Public Health data infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong alignment identified
<p>Building on Healthy Chicago Equity Zones invest in a community-based participatory infrastructure across the city with communities leading research efforts to frame their own questions, produce their own data, and most importantly construct solutions.</p>	<p>Data & Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the use of community-level and disaggregated data to address disparities and advance equity

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Transition Plan Goal #8: Ensure prevention as core activity

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
CDPH should be a regional leader in championing preventive health measures. It should educate, coordinate, and advocate for gender-specific and culturally respectful clinical preventive measures. It should lead on population specific activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified
Leverage other City departments and institutions (e.g. Libraries, Parks, CBOs) to anchor population focused prevention resources and activities.	Leadership & Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen cross-system coordination between city-level agencies to meet strategic priorities for advancing the early childhood system
Document the impact of investments (or disinvestments) in schools, parks, and community services on the health of Chicagoans.	Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize existing dollars by creating efficiencies where possible (e.g., restructuring and simplifying funding streams, supporting braiding and blending of funds) Determine the true cost of funding a high-quality early childhood system that will achieve the vision of ECRC

Transition Plan Goal #9: Advance environmental health

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Accelerate the schedule for replacing lead pipes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified
Strengthen environmental justice activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified

Transition Plan Goal #10: Recognize the health workforce is the most important component of the public health infrastructure

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Propose a hiring plan to increase the number of CDPH staff on the corporate budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified
Increase the cadre of Public Health Nurses in order to expand home visits to newborns, expand support of school nurses, have a nursing presence in all aspects of the CDPH's work.	Workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the capacity of Family Connects Chicago to bring home visits to all babies born in Chicago area hospitals
Increase and expand the number and role of Community Health Workers. Support the establishment of appropriate training and "stackable" credentials which afford CHW the respect, flexibility, and autonomy they deserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Transition Plan Goal #11: Acknowledge violence as a public health issue and measure of well-being

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
N/A	N/A

Transition Plan Goal #12: Overhaul the mental health system

TRANSITION PLAN NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION	ECRC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS STRATEGIC DIRECTION
CDPH should expand and improve direct service provision by personal focused behavioral health care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified
CDPH should implement better accountability and coordination systems for mental health clinics receiving public funding to improve scope and quality of service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified
Mental health should be safe, accessible, affordable, and convenient for every resident of Chicago.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified
CDPH should expand non-police crisis response and integrate it with sustained crisis-prevention services. Work to improve coordination with agencies across the city, county, and state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong alignment identified

APPENDIX B

ECRC STAKEHOLDER DIRECTORY

Crafted through collaboration, the Directory aims to offer a list of government and community-based organizations dedicated to enhancing Access, Quality, and Family & Community Engagement in the early childhood sector.

ECRC STAKEHOLDER DIRECTORY

ENTITY TYPES

- Coalition / Committee - temporary structure to drive towards a shared outcome
- Department / Office - subdivision of an existing entity
- Organization - nonprofit organizations or standalone entities
- Resource - valuable information, service, or fiscal allocation to help close current gaps

QUALITY

ENTITY	ENTITY TYPE	LOCATED IN THE CHICAGO-AREA	GOVERNMENT OR COMMUNITY-BASED ORG (CBO)	CONTACT	CONTACT INFORMATION	NOTES
<u>Child Care Advocates United</u>	Coalition / Committee	No	CBO		steeringcommittee@ccaillinois.org	
<u>Child Care Resource and Referral Database</u>	Resource	Yes	CBO		312.823.134	Cook County initiative under IL Action for Children
<u>Curiosity Classrooms at CPS</u>	Resource	Yes	Government			
<u>Early Childhood Collaborations</u>	Coalition / Committee	Yes	CBO			
<u>Early Learning Council Workforce and Quality Committee</u>	Coalition / Committee	No	Government	Tom Layman	Tom.Layman@Illinois.gov	statewide
<u>Illinois Action for Children</u>	Organization	No	CBO		generalquestions@actforchildren.org	statewide
<u>Kids First Chicago</u>	Organization	Yes	CBO		info@kidsfirstchicago.org	
<u>National Association for the Education of Young Children</u>	Organization	No	CBO		202-232-8777	

ECRC STAKEHOLDER DIRECTORY

ACCESS

ENTITY	ENTITY TYPE	LOCATED IN THE CHICAGO-AREA	GOVERNMENT OR COMMUNITY-BASED ORG (CBO)	CONTACT	CONTACT INFORMATION	NOTES
<u>Birth to Five Illinois Action Council</u>	Coalition / Committee	Yes	Government	Edna Navarro Vidaurre	enavarrovidaurre@birthtofiveil.com	
<u>Birth to Five Illinois Family Council</u>	Coalition / Committee	Yes	Government	Edna Navarro Vidaurre	enavarrovidaurre@birthtofiveil.com	
<u>Chicago Early Learning</u>	Department / Office	Yes	Government			
<u>Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship</u>	Resource	Yes	Government	Sandy de Leon	sdeleon28@ccc.edu	
<u>Child Care Advocates United</u>	Organization	No	CBO		steeringcommittee@ccaillinois.org	
<u>Collaborations for Early Childhood</u>	Organization	Yes	CBO			
<u>Early Childhood Special Education</u>	Department / Office	No	Government			
<u>Early Learning Council Access Committee</u>	Coalition / Committee	No	Government	Anita Rumage	Anita.J.Rumage@Illinois.gov	statewide
<u>Early Learning Council Integration and Alignment Committee</u>	Coalition / Committee	No	Government	Jamilah Jordan	Jamilah.R.Jordan@Illinois.gov	
<u>Episcopal Charities and Community Services</u>	Resource	Yes	CBO			grant
<u>Family Connects Chicago</u>	Resource	No	Government		info@onechifam.org.	
<u>Illinois Action for Children</u>	Resource	No	CBO		generalquestions@actforchildren.org	enrollment campaign
<u>Illinois Department of Human Services - Child Care Advisory Council</u>	Coalition / Committee	No	CBO	Carolyn Marmolejo	Carolyn.Marmolejo@Illinois.gov	
<u>National Louis University</u>	Organization	No	Government			low cost ECE coursework
<u>We, The Village</u>	Coalition / Committee	No	CBO			Right to Care's statewide coalition

ECRC STAKEHOLDER DIRECTORY

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ENTITY	ENTITY TYPE	LOCATED IN THE CHICAGO-AREA	GOVERNMENT OR COMMUNITY-BASED ORG (CBO)	CONTACT	CONTACT INFORMATION	NOTES
<u>Birth to Five Illinois Family Council</u>	Coalition / Committee	Yes	Government	Edna Navarro Vidaurre	enavarrovidaurre@birthtofiveil.com	
Chicago Public Schools	Organization	Yes	Government			parent universities & presence at community fairs
<u>Child Care Advisory Council-Family Engagement Committee</u>	Coalition / Committee	No	Government			
<u>COFI</u>	Organization	No	CBO		COFI@cofionline.org	statewide
<u>ConnectTeen @ Lurie Children's Hospital</u>	Resource	Yes	CBO		Email: ConnectTeen@luriechildrens.org Phone: 312 771 3028	
<u>Early Childhood Collaborations</u>	Coalition / Committee	Yes	CBO			
<u>Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee</u>	Coalition / Committee	No	Government			
<u>ECE CEO Roundtable</u>	Coalition / Committee	Yes	CBO			
<u>IAFC Community Parenting Saturation Project</u>	Resource	No	CBO		312-823-1100	Chicago branch exists
<u>Illinois Action For Children</u>	Organization	No	CBO		312-823-1100	statewide
<u>Little Village Education Collaborative</u>	Coalition / Committee	Yes	CBO		info@enlacechicago.org	
<u>Parent Mentor program</u>	Resource	Yes	CBO		https://www.parentengagement.institute/contact	
<u>Playful Learning</u>	Organization	Yes	CBO		https://playfullearningillinois.org/contact/	
<u>Start Early</u>	Organization	Yes	CBO			

APPENDIX C DATA ENDNOTES

DATA ENDNOTES

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