



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BIRTH TO FIVE ILLINOIS PUBLISHES EARLY CHILDHOOD REGIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Find Out What Families Need Across Illinois

Birth to Five Illinois has published 39 Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessments, now available to both local communities and state leaders. The assessments reflect the strengths and needs in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) service landscape at the regional level. The publication of these reports marks a major milestone for [Birth to Five Illinois](#), the State's equity-driven regional community system focused on understanding why families are not able to access ECEC programs and services.

Each of the State's [39 Regions](#) created an Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessment by reviewing available data from the [Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map \(IECAM\)](#) and other state and federal sources, as well as listening to local communities about their experiences with accessing ECEC services. Information was gathered from parents and caregivers, ECEC professionals, business leaders, local and county elected officials, and other voices from every community in the State. Regional recommendations were developed based on the identified needs of families collected through focus groups, interviews, surveys, community meetings, and [Action Council and Family Council](#) meetings.

Established to highlight family and caregiver voices, Birth to Five Illinois will continue to be a regional convener, working to support the community in amplifying local needs and experiences throughout the upcoming year. Regional Council members and staff will share these reports, listen to feedback, and gather additional insights into the areas of ECEC needs. Statewide leadership will extend invitations to meet with ECEC leaders, advocates, and elected officials to highlight opportunities for improvements and support needed from state and federal ECEC programs.

"The importance of high-quality early learning experiences cannot be overstated. The first few years of a child's life are critical to establishing a healthy foundation for lifelong learning," said

State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders. “ISBE is proud to have supported the launch of Birth to Five Illinois and the creation of these Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessments. We look to better understand the needs of each community as we work to eliminate early childhood deserts in every community and fill critical access gaps in underserved areas across the state.”

Kisha Davis, Bureau Chief for the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Early Childhood, said, “It is our hope that the information provided within the reports will allow state, regional, and local stakeholders the opportunity to collectively come together to identify strategies to address the challenges identified in the reports.”

Working with state and local leaders, Birth to Five Illinois will develop Action Plans that will lay out how each Region can use available local resources to move forward with the needs they prioritized. The goal is that every Region in the State will have an ECEC blueprint and be prepared to take advantage of local and state opportunities for expansion.

These Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessments and more may be found at:
www.birthtofiveil.com/reports.

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About Birth to Five Illinois

Birth to Five Illinois’ mission is to create a statewide regional infrastructure that will amplify input from communities in the development of policies and funding priorities. We support the mobilization of communities to build and sustain equitable access to inclusive, high-quality early childhood services for all children and families in the state of Illinois.