



Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessment **ADDENDUM**

Region 1

(Adams, Brown, Cass, Morgan, Pike & Scott
Counties)



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Introduction

In 2021, the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Funding issued a report with findings that highlighted the inequities in ECEC funding in Illinois and the need to create a better statewide infrastructure to support ECEC professionals, expand services and programs for families and caregivers, and increase enrollment in ECEC programs. The report focused on the importance of addressing racial inequities and the need to include local voices in the conversation funders and decisionmakers were having about ECEC.

The experiences and knowledge families, caregivers, and Early Childhood professionals gain while navigating the complexities of the State's ECEC system is valuable, and understanding their lived experience in the local context is vital for decisionmakers to ensure communities have access to the programs, services, and supports they need. To this end, Birth to Five Illinois was created to harness family and caregiver voices in ECEC and serve as a bridge between the communities and policymakers so family, caregiver, and professional experiences can guide the decisions made to expand or enhance services across the State.

Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessments

Between August 2022 and May 2023, Regional Teams throughout the State met with their local Action Council and Family Council to talk about Early Childhood data and hear about their experiences with ECEC programs and services. They also conducted focus groups, interviews, held community listening sessions, and conducted surveys to gather additional feedback from caregivers, ECEC professionals, and priority populations in their Region. A community report, the Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessment, was completed in June 2023. However, recognizing that not all community members had a chance to provide their feedback on data or share their experiences in the original Regional Needs Assessment, additional feedback was collected through community events and meetings, and this Addendum was created to complement the existing report. The new information provided by community members, agencies, organizations, and other community stakeholders is listed below.

Local Community Collaborations

Two Local Early Childhood Collaborations are in development in our Region.

Brown County Collaboration is submitting information to Illinois Action for Children's Partner Plan Act to be formally recognized as a Collaboration.

Jacksonville School District 117 (JSD 117) is partnering with the Jacksonville Police Department (JPD) to coordinate trauma referrals when police are involved with a student in the district. The district Preschool for All (PFA) and Prevention Initiative (PI) programs reported over 60 notices of police action in the last year; police action refers to law enforcement interaction with caregivers

whose children attend the PFA and/or PI program. The collaboration between the school district and JPD allows them to assess trauma response in students and serves as a referral resource for enrollment in the PI program.

Slot Gap

Since the initial report was published, the Brown County PI program added 30 slots for Region 1 children. This happened as a result of a dissolving partnership with another school district, located in another Region.

Next Steps

As Regional Teams continue their conversations with caregivers, ECEC professionals, and community stakeholders, their stories and experiences with ECEC programs and services will be recorded and shared with state and local agencies, legislators, funders, and decisionmakers. We hope our work will contribute to reimagining an Early Childhood system that is more equitable for all families and support the incredible work ECEC professionals do every day.