



## OVERVIEW

November 18, 2021



Illinois  
State Board of  
Education





## Today we will cover:

- Background and Scope of the Challenge
- Vision of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity
- Membership
- Structure and Function
  - Regional Hubs
  - Full Transfer of AAS
  - New ISBE Policies
- Student Support Services and Funding
- Institutional Financial Supports
- Goals and Reporting
- Advisory Committee

## Background: State and National Context

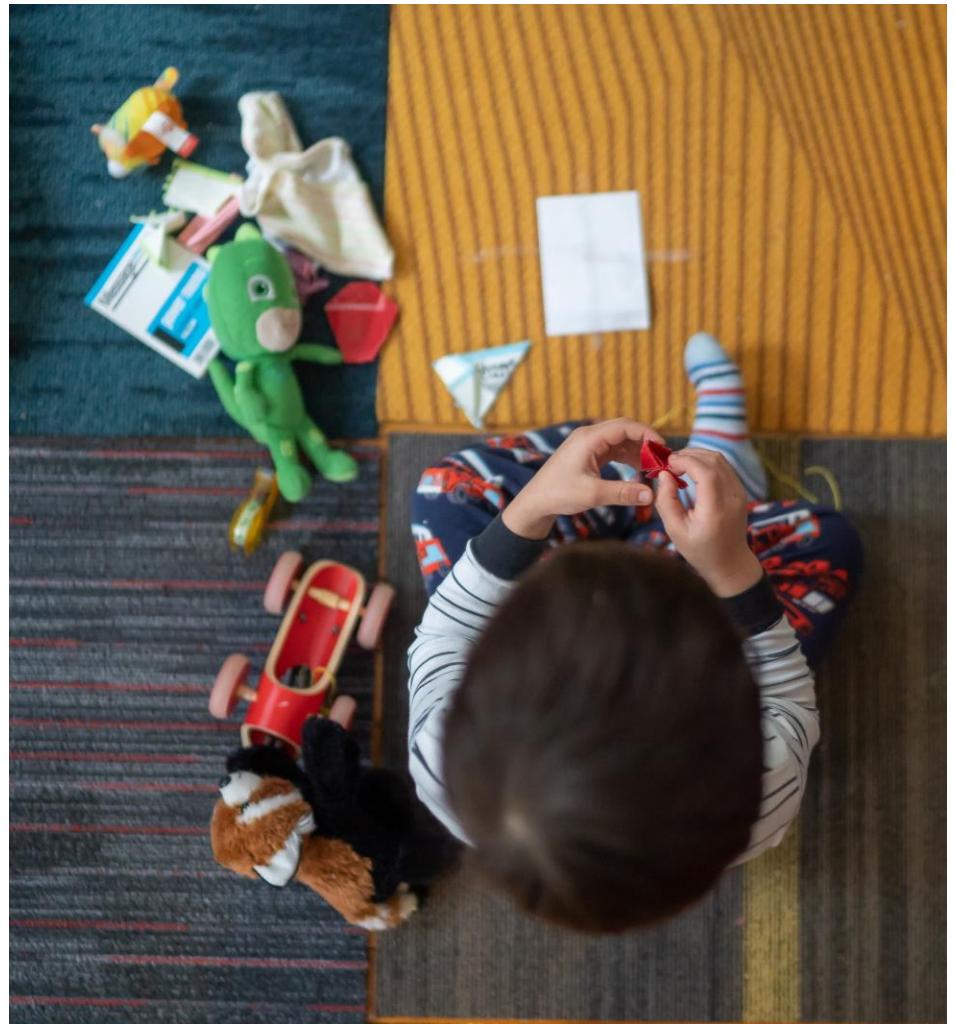
Illinois is facing deep challenges ensuring a stable system of childcare and preschool for children, families, providers, and the workforce.

We are at a critical juncture for early childhood, with a tremendous amount of work happening at the state and national level to transform the early childhood system.

- **Illinois:** Governor's Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding Commission made bold recommendations to restructure and fund the system to more equitably support children and families, providers and communities, and the early childhood workforce.
- **Federal:** The White House's Build Back Better agenda and the B5 Child Care and Early Learning Entitlement Bill (in its current form) includes a substantial investment to support subsidized child care and free universal preschool for 3- and 4-year olds. Included in the bill are requirements and supports to build a highly-qualified and well-compensated workforce.
- **Higher Education Strategic Plan:** [A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth](#) includes a focus on the early childhood educator workforce shortage.

## Current Barriers To Increasing Degree Completions

- Incomplete articulation from 2-year to 4-year programs
  - Requirements lead students to repeat courses
  - Confusing pathways that discourage students
- Courses not offered consistently or at times accessible to students
- Lack of wrap around supports for working adults to succeed in college
- Student teaching requirements that don't allow incumbent workforce to stay on the job
- Scholarship resources are often exhausted, leading to interruptions in students' progress



## The Vision: Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity

- Create a consortium to streamline, coordinate, and improve accessibility of degree completion pathways for incumbent early childhood workforce and employers.
- Allow students to take coursework at multiple consortium institutions when and where they need it.
- Transfer community colleges degrees in their entirety to a participating four-year school so that students do not have to retake coursework or extra credit hours.
- Establish seamless processes for students so that they do not have to navigate multiple institutions.
- Lead to sustained expansion of educational pipelines.
- Work at regional and statewide scale.
- Sustainable and can be expanded to other educational disciplines.
- Embodied in P.A. 102-0174

# Membership

- All public universities and community colleges with early childhood programs are members by statute.
- Each member of the consortium will sign-on to a set of agreements designed to ensure smooth, high-quality, seamless pathways for students to their degrees.
- Private institutions with early childhood programs are encouraged to become members of the consortium by signing-on to the set of agreements agreed to by the public institutions and by meeting statutory requirements.
  - Only non-profit private institutions may become members.
  - Must sign an MOU agreeing to follow the requirements of the consortium / statute
- All members must be accredited by Higher Learning Commission and entitled to offer Gateways Credentials



## Structure and Function

- Course offerings within the Consortium shall be available to any student enrolled in a member institution if the course is not available at home the institution.
  - Course offering across institutions
  - Illinois Community College Online (ILCCO)
- The Consortium shall work to establish standard methods for awarding credit for prior learning.
- Admissions, financial arrangements, registration, and advising are functions of the home institution but honored across the Consortium.

## Structure and Function, continued

- Determine demand in partnership with employers, including school districts.
- Assign college credit for incumbent workers with the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (by 1/31/22).
- Leverage Gateways competencies and competency-based instructional modules and assessment tools to support more flexible and personalized paths to completion.
- If feasible:
  - Create an Open Education Resource Library.
  - Support participation in the statewide registry system through INCCRRA.



## **Structure and Function – Regional Hubs (Proposed)**

Regional hubs will:

- Function as professional learning communities, with opportunities for convening and collaborative problem solving.
- Be open to a broad spectrum of two-year and four-year institutions from a region to participate and may include institutions outside a region, dependent upon existing partnerships.
- Will be broadly porous and open for participation from multiple institutions across institutional types.
- Provide an important student-centered connection to support institutions throughout implementation.

## Full Transfer of Associate of Applied Science Degree

- Students with an AAS and Gateways Level 4 and has a GPA of at least 2.0/4.0 can transfer to Bachelor's program at a university in the Consortium.
- Member universities *shall* grant junior-level status in an early childhood program to any student who has graduated from an Illinois Community College with an AAS in early childhood education and a Gateways Level 4 credential.
- Member universities may not require transferring student to repeat courses applied toward the AAS and all must count toward baccalaureate degree completion.

## Full Transfer of Associate of Applied Science Degree, continued

- Students with an AAS may not be required to take a total number of credits greater than those of “native” students (i.e., those first starting a baccalaureate program at the same institution.)
  - Includes courses where credit was given for prior learning.
  - Additional coursework for endorsements for a Professional Educator License is allowed.



# ISBE Early Childhood Licensure Policies

- Student Teaching
  - **Pay:** Student teachers may be compensated for their services per Illinois Administrative Code Section 25.620(f). **Already in effect.**
  - **Grade Range:** For an early childhood education endorsement, individuals may student teach in a setting with children from birth through grade 2. **Already in effect.**
  - **Supervision:** Forthcoming Part 25 rulemaking will allow an educator with a Level 5 Gateways credential (rather than a PEL) to serve as cooperating teacher for candidates seeking early childhood licensure. **Pending rulemaking.**
- General Education Requirements
  - Forthcoming Part 25 rulemaking will strike requirements for science and social science coursework for licensure as this content is part of national standards to which programs are already aligned. **Pending rulemaking.**
- Licensure Test
  - Question by question response analysis underway.
  - Possible actions include question removal and/or bias panel to revise questions.

## Student Supports

- **Student supports** will be specifically designed for working adults
  - **Navigators** provide personalized assistance for application and financial aid processes.
    - Child Care Resource &Referral agencies will operate the navigator program.
    - ISAC will provide training on financial aid to navigators.
  - Navigators “hand-off” students to each student’s program coach for a personal connection.
  - **Program Coaches and/or Mentors** at institutions will provide support to students to persist and complete their studies.
- Student **outreach campaign** will be launched to increase awareness.

## Student Financial Supports

- **Scholarship for Total Cost of Attendance:** funded through the federal dollars, alongside Pell and MAP to cover tuition, fees, transportation, childcare, or other living expenses.
- **Student Teaching:** Cost of attendance will increase to replace income lost during a leave of absence from work, if needed.
- **Payment of Financial “Holds”:** Funds available to institutions to help students pay off outstanding balances.
- **New and Currently Enrolled Students:** Financial supports will be available to both new and currently enrolled students who are members of the incumbent early childhood workforce.

# Scholarship Overview

## Eligibility Criteria:

- Member of the ECE incumbent workforce working in congregate care settings, pursuing a degree in ECE that leads to a Gateways credential.
- U.S. citizen or federally eligible noncitizen.
- Must attend an institution that is a member of the Consortium.
- Must register for at least 3 credit hours in an ECE program, and if enrolled at a university have at lease junior status.



## Scholarship Overview, continued

### General Information:

- Scholarship will be available for AY21-22.
- Program covers applicant's total cost of attendance for an academic year, plus summer, less other financial aid received, up to a maximum amount.
- Students must reapply annually, and priority will be given to returning students.
- ISAC has provided an overview [here](#) on its website.
  - The full application will be available soon.
  - Students should be sure to file the 2021-2022 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

## Financial Supports for Institutions



- Curriculum design/re-design
- Mentors/coaches
- Student holds or other emergency needs

## Goals and Reporting

- Goals for enrollment, persistence, and completion to be achieved by September 30, 2024.
- Future goals to be set by agencies, in consultation with the Advisory Committee.
  - Recognize pipeline of associate degree completions in setting goals for Bachelor's degree enrollment and completion.
- Regular reporting to General Assembly, Senate and House higher education committees, the Governor, and the Advisory Committee of the Consortium.

# CONSORTIUM TARGET POPULATION

8,000 who need Bachelor's degrees and 20,000 who need a Gateways Credential up to an associate degree

	Teachers	Assistant Teachers	Totals
High School/GED	4,463	11,907	16,370
Some college	1,570	585	2,155
CC Certificate	1,570	786	2,356
Associate Ready (Sum above categories)	7,603	13,278	20,881
Associate Degree (Bachelor's ready)	5,619	2,051	7,670

# Enrollment and Completion Goals

	<b>Enrollment Fall of AY 2019-20</b>	<b>Enrolled or Completed Students as of Fall of AY 2021-22</b>	<b>Enrolled or Completed Students as of Fall of AY 2022-23</b>	<b>Enrolled or Completed Students as of Fall of AY 2023-24</b>	<b>Enrolled or Completed Students as of Fall of AY 2024-25</b>	<b>Additional Number Of Students Enrolled &amp;/Or Completed*</b>
<b>Community Colleges</b>	<b>3,527</b>	<b>4,162</b>	<b>5,162</b>	<b>6,291</b>	<b>7,027</b>	<b>3,500</b>
<b>Public Universities</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>1,796</b>	<b>2,077</b>	<b>2,182</b>	<b>983</b>
<b>Private Universities</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>1,363</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>450</b>

Notes:

- First five numbered columns include non-members of the incumbent workforce since goals are built upon previously enrolled student populations. Last column reflects the goals for enrollment and completion inclusive *only* of the target population.
- These goals are approximately 18 percent of the target population (20,881 associate-ready and 7,670 bachelor's ready educators).
- Persistence is not included as a specific goal in terms of a percentage but is "baked in" because student must persist for these goals to be reached.

## Advisory Committee

- Co-Chairs:
  - Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)
  - Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)
  - Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
  - Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS)
  - Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD)
- Purpose: To provide guidance on the operation of the Consortium
- Membership: Employers and experts appointed by the Co-Chairs
  - Includes 36 named categories of appointments, including employers, school districts representatives, early childhood advocates, leadership of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and House Committee on Higher Education, state agencies, unions, public and private colleges and universities
- Quarterly meetings

## Resources

- Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Act

# Questions?

## Welcome Independent Institution Representatives – Please introduce yourself and your institution in the chat

*“There is a pressing need to streamline, coordinate, and improve accessibility of degree completion pathways and eligible not-for-profit institutions are recognized as an important contributor to achieving the goals of the Consortium.”*

# Agenda

- Review MOU for consortium participation
- Discuss institutional funding
- Discuss scholarship
- Next meeting
- Q&A

## MOU Highlights\* of Institutional Agreements

- Cooperate with other member institutions through regional hubs and statewide.
- Serve the incumbent workforce by offering programs of study in flexible and convenient formats, times, locations appropriate for working adult learners.
- Develop methods for awarding credit for prior learning and accept transfer credit for prior learning from other institutions.
- Accept transfer students in accordance with Section 130-10 of the Transitions in Education Act.
- Work with early childhood employers to implement programs to best meet the needs of the incumbent workforce.
- Provide data required for reporting and/or sharing information to promote student progress, as needed and allowable.
- Assist in the development of credit options for the Child Development Associate Credential (CDA).
- Set and strive to achieve targets for enrollment, persistence, and completion of those working in early childhood settings.

\*Please read full text of the MOU for complete information

## MOU Next Steps and Deadlines

- Return by noon tomorrow, Friday 11/19 for inclusion in first published list of participating independent institutions on ISAC website and in scholarship application.
- Return by noon, Wednesday 12/15 to be added to list of participating institutions on ISAC website and in scholarship application.
- Commitment to join the consortium, evidenced by **return of signed MOU**, required by noon Wednesday 12/15 to be eligible for institutional funding.
- A member institution may designate a representative to the Consortium, who will have full status as a voting member and all the responsibilities and roles as a public member representative. The representative will act as the institution's liaison to the consortium and will be responsible for communicating information about the consortium to all institutional stakeholders.

## **Independent Colleges and Universities – Institutional Funding**

- Only consortium members who have returned the signed MOU by 12/15/21 will be eligible for institutional funding.
- List of eligible activities, process and deadline for applying, maximum award amount, reporting requirements, deliverables, etc. will be available in December.
- Examples of eligible use of institutional grant funding:
  - Curriculum or program redesign
  - Adjunct faculty
  - Coordination of work with internal/external stakeholders
  - Student outreach and/or student supports
  - Consortium-related travel
- Additional funds available for:
  - Institutional coaches/mentors
  - Debt forgiveness

## **Independent Colleges and Universities – Institutional Funding and Goals**

- Specifics will be outlined in the grant agreement, but generally:
  - Funding will be on reimbursement basis, with quarterly reports submitted to IBHE and funds released upon confirmation of implementation of proposed activities.
  - Grant agreement will include a set of goals and deliverables, including the number of students to be enrolled/retained/completed and other reporting requirements, as outlined in PA-102-1074, for example:
    - Tuition rates charged and net prices paid
    - Outreach to incumbent workforce members
    - Student holistic support
    - Evidence of engagement and responsiveness to needs of employer partners
    - Financial report
- Institutional goals for enrollment and completion will be set with IBHE/ICCB staff.

# ECACE Scholarship



**ISAC**  
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

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### Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship Program

Below is information about the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship Program (ECACE), anticipated to be launched during November, 2021. This page will be updated when the application is available and as more details about the program are finalized.

If you think you will be applying for the scholarship, there may be steps you can take now to get started. ECACE applicants must also complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) for the same academic year that they are applying for this program. If you haven't already filed a FAFSA for this academic year (2021-22), you can complete that part of the application process now. [Jump to the info below to learn how.](#)

#### Program Description

If you work or have worked in early childhood education and you're seeking additional credentials and/or a degree in early childhood education, you may be eligible for the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program. The program was created to address the shortage of qualified early childhood educators by encouraging the pursuit of credentials and advancement of already-held degrees in early childhood education, with an aim toward building a strong, well-prepared workforce. Recipients of the scholarship are expected to continue or return to

**Paying For College**  
**Applying For Financial Aid**  
**Types Of Financial Aid**  
Illinois And Federal Financial Aid Programs  
Work-Study Programs  
Grants  
Loans  
**Scholarships**  
Minority Teachers Of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship Program  
Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW) Program  
Early Childhood Access Consortium For Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program  
Golden Apple Scholars Of Illinois

## Second Consortium Meeting: December 8, 2021 2:00 – 4:30 pm

- Private institutions that have returned a signed MOU may send **one** representative.
- Representative may be Provost/Chief Academic Officer, or they may delegate a different permanent representative.
- Representative must be **authorized to vote** on behalf of the institution.



**Questions?**

**THANK YOU!**