

# EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY

## OVERVIEW

September 13, 2021



Illinois  
State Board of  
Education



Governor's Office of  
Early Childhood Development



## Today we will cover:

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

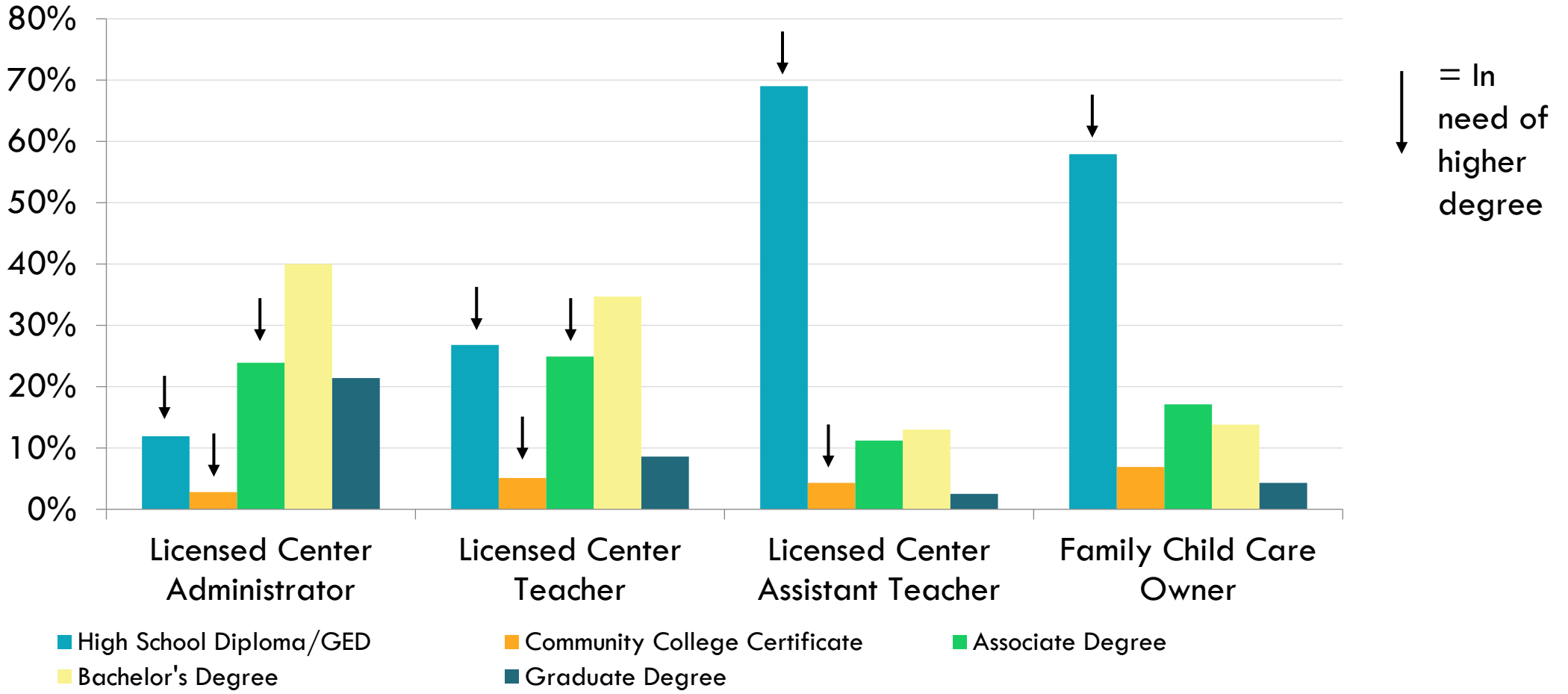


## Background: Supporting ECE Workforce Development

- Illinois has developed a stackable credentialing system to create career opportunities for the early childhood care and education workforce
  - Gateways to Opportunity Credentials are competency-based and aligned with state and national standards
  - 99% of Illinois institutions of higher education are entitled to offer the Gateways credentials
  - An array of assessment and instructional tools, developed by faculty, are [available online](#)
  - Illinois and City of Chicago policies support the acquisition of the Gateways credentials
- Higher Education Strategic Plan, [A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth](#), focus on educator workforce shortage, especially early childhood educator workforce

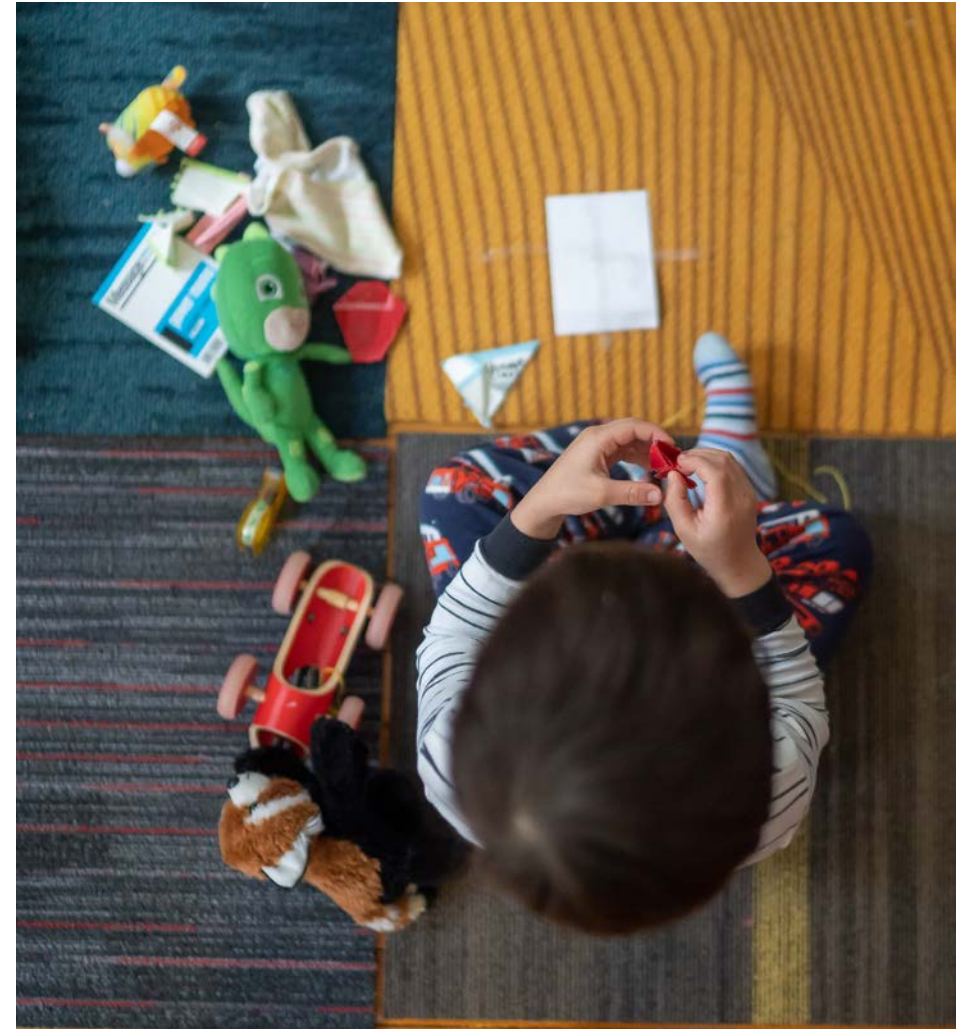


# Early childhood workforce is in need of upskilling to meet the educational needs of children



## Current barriers to increasing degree completions

- Lack of consistency when students attend multiple institutions lead to repeat courses
- Incomplete articulation from 2-year to 4-year programs
  - Requirements lead students to repeat courses
  - Confusing pathways that discourage students
- Courses not consistently offered, too far away for students to access, or at times not workable for employed adults



# Current barriers to increasing degree completions

- Lack of supports for working adults to succeed in college
  - Guidance, academic supports, and other supports not available and not at times working students need them
- Student teaching requirements that don't allow incumbent workforce to stay on the job
- Scholarship resources are exhausted each year, leading to interruptions in students' progress



## The Vision: Early Childhood Access to Equity Consortium

- 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](#)





# Consortium target: 8,000 who need Bachelor's degree and 20,000 who need Gateways credentials 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	<b>20,881</b>
Associate Degree (Bachelor's ready)	5,619	2,051	<b>7,670</b>



Source: Gateways Registry, Data pulled March, 2020

## 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
- All members must be accredited by Higher Learning Commission and entitled to offer Gateways Credentials



## Structure and Function

- Regional hubs with universities and associated community colleges
  - Hub structure and operational role to be developed
- Course offerings within each hub available to any student enrolled in a member institution if course not available at home institution
  - Course offering across regional hubs by agreement of members
  - Illinois Community College Online (ILCCO)
- Establish standard methods for awarding credit for prior learning
- Admissions, financial arrangements, registration, and advising are functions of home institution but honored across Consortium



## Structure and Function, continued

- Determine demand in partnership with employers, including school districts
- Assign college credit for incumbent workers with 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 Open Education Resource Library
  - Support participation in statewide registry system through INCCRRA



## Full transfer of Associate of Applied Science degree

- Student with 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 AAS may not be required to take 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 to PEL 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 gateway 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 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 Costs of Attendance** funded through the federal dollars and with Pell and MAP to cover tuition, fees, transportation, childcare, and 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 institution to help students pay off outstanding balance.
- **Currently enrolled students.** Financial supports will be available to currently enrolled students who are members of the incumbent early childhood workforce.



# Scholarship Overview

## Eligibility Criteria:

- Member of the ECE incumbent workforce pursuing a degree in ECE
- Illinois resident who is U.S. citizen or Federal eligible noncitizen
- Must attend an institution member of the Consortium
- Register for at least 3 credit hours in an ECE program and be at least a junior if enrolled at a university



## Scholarship Overview, continued

### General Information:

- Application will become available later this fall and will cover 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
- Students must reapply annually, and priority will be given to returning students
- 50 scholarships reserved for master's-level students



## 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 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, Governor, and Advisory Committee on Consortium and individual institution operations



# 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



## Consortium Kick-Off Meeting: September 22, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

- Each participating institution
- Provost/Chief Academic Officer will be invited, but may delegate a different permanent member



## Resources

- [Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Act](#)

THANK YOU!

