



ECACE
EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS
CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY



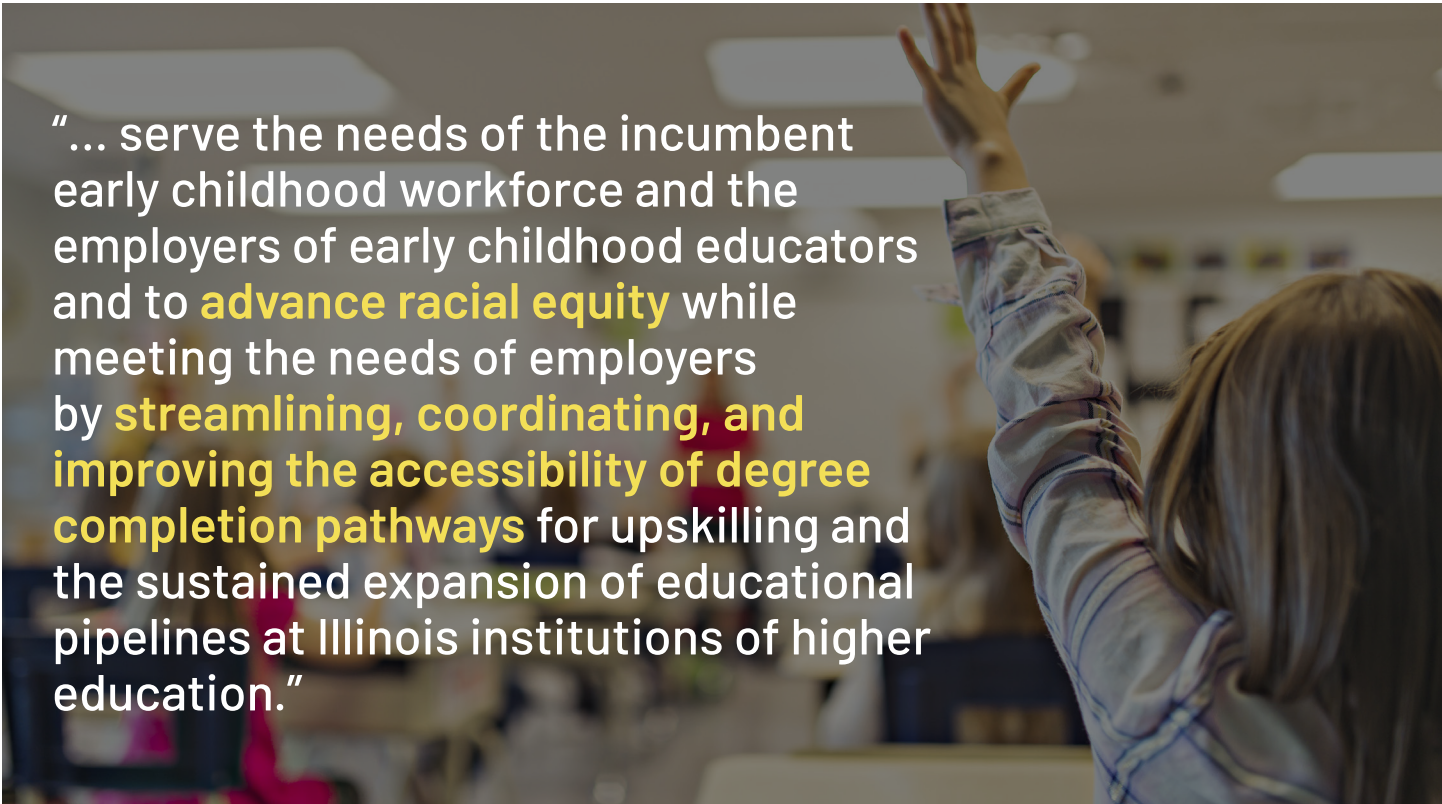
Advisory Committee Welcome Packet



Illinois
State Board of
Education

Welcome from the Co-Chairs

Welcome and thank you for agreeing to share your expertise as a member of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Advisory Committee. The Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Act (Public Act 102-0174) was signed into law on July 28, 2021. It created the ECACE, the purpose of which is to:



“... serve the needs of the incumbent early childhood workforce and the employers of early childhood educators and to **advance racial equity** while meeting the needs of employers by **streamlining, coordinating, and improving the accessibility of degree completion pathways** for upskilling and the sustained expansion of educational pipelines at Illinois institutions of higher education.”

There is great excitement as work continues to support the early childhood workforce. We know that your experience and support will help guide the work of the consortium while helping to move the incumbent workforce through training and education programs that enhance the educational attainment of workers and ensure a highly skilled workforce is ready to serve the children of Illinois.

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Advisory Committee and we look forward to collaborating with you to ensure its success!

Co-Chairs of ECACE

Dr. Brian Durham, Executive Director, ICCB
Dr. Jason Helfer, Deputy Instructional Education Officer, ISBE
Ginger Ostro, Executive Director, IBHE
Dr. Jamilah Jor'dan, Executive Director, GOECD
Michelle Wood, Bureau Chief, Quality Initiatives, IDHS

Background

Illinois must meet the strong demand for highly qualified early childhood educators by prioritizing innovative higher education pathways that support greater access and completion. The idea of creating a consortium of higher education institutions to accomplish this was initially proposed during a strategic planning process that was undertaken by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The consortium was envisioned as an agreement among all public universities and community colleges with early childhood education programs, as well as any private institutions that chose to participate, to cooperate in offering programs of study tailored to the needs of the working adults who comprise the incumbent early childhood workforce. Consequently, [Illinois Public Act 102-0174](#) established the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity and the basic parameters for its operation. The consortium will enable member institutions to improve access to preparation programs and increase the proportion of the incumbent workforce holding associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees and certificates, Gateways to Opportunity[®] credentials, and other licensure endorsements.

Statutory Basis

PA 102-0174 charges the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) with jointly convening the ECACE Advisory Committee. Membership on the Advisory Committee is composed of employers, higher education representatives, members of the General Assembly, and other experts appointed by the convening state agencies and the specific representatives dictated by the law. The Advisory Committee will hold quarterly meetings that will be open to the public per the provisions of the Open Meetings Act.

Charge

The charge of the Advisory Committee is to guide the operation of the Consortium, including:

- Act as champions for the Consortium and purposes of PA 102-0174.
- As outlined in Section 30 of the legislation, review reports submitted to the General Assembly, to the Senate and House Committees with oversight over higher education, and to the Governor on the progress made by the Consortium.
- Provide advice and recommendations to the lead agency(s) and higher education institutions as they meet their responsibilities as detailed in the Act.
- Provide a forum to bring together employers in the early childhood care and education industry, higher education, and other stakeholders to share perspective to best support the work of the Consortium.
- Provide consultation and feedback to the state agencies charged with setting new metrics and goals for the Consortium after the close of the 2024-2025 academic year.

Guiding Principles

We will work collaboratively to ensure that individual members of the workforce, providers, young children and families, and the broader state workforce remain our focus and that we intentionally consider how to balance the needs of each of these stakeholders. To do so, we will be guided by the following principles:

- Illinois envisions a racially equitable, inclusive, and diverse workforce across early childhood education and care programs.
- The early childhood period offers a substantial opportunity to help children start with a sturdy foundation for learning; the adults surrounding and supporting children in the early years have the greatest impact on children's growth and development.
- Specialized knowledge and skills, demonstrated through the acquisition of degrees, credentials, and licensure, are necessary to work with young children and their families in early care and education settings.
- The Illinois economy depends on a having robust system of early care and education options for working families.

Ground Rules

We recognize both the value of collaborative and systems change work and the difficulty in engaging in this work. As such, we agree to operate per the ground rules below.

- Keep the early childhood workforce and young children and families at the center.
- Listen fully and thoughtfully.
- Commit to candid discussions of diverse ideas in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Suspend predetermined positions to allow the collective intelligence to emerge.
- Monitor your personal technology.
- Share your voice, yet monitor your airtime.
- Be solutions oriented.
- Make effort to reach consensus.
- Respect requests for confidentiality – both implicitly and explicitly stated.
- Practice reflection; personally investigate the assumptions or bias underlying your positions.
- Commit to preparation; read meeting minutes and review materials associated with prior or upcoming meetings, as necessary.



Find a list of quarterly meetings online
<https://www.ecace.org/>



Points of Contact

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