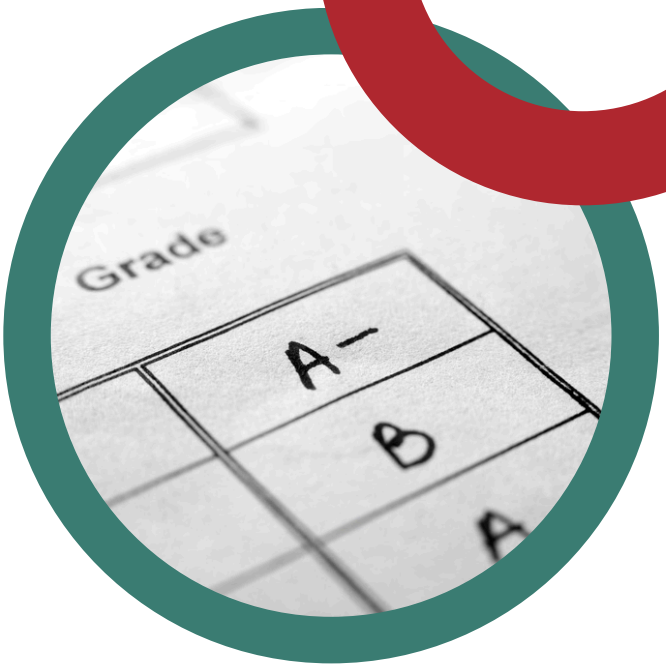

ILLINOIS EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM SCORECARD: ESTABLISHING A BASELINE FOR THE TRANSITION TO IDEC

CIVIC FEDERATION

Authored by Lily Padula

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Illinois is reorganizing its early childhood system through the creation of the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC). As programs, funding, and administrative responsibilities move into a more unified structure, there is a need for a clear starting point against which future progress can be assessed. This report establishes that baseline for policymakers, system leaders, providers, advocates, and others seeking to understand how Illinois' early childhood system is performing at the outset of the transition.

The report serves two related purposes. First, it creates a repeatable framework for assessing questions that are often considered separately by program. Are families able to access services? Are those services high quality and inclusive? Is the workforce stable? Is funding adequate and transparent? Are outcomes improving equitably? And does the State have the data systems needed to answer those questions consistently?

The Civic Federation intends to use this baseline in future evaluations of Illinois' early childhood system, allowing subsequent editions to assess how these measures change as IDEC develops and assumes greater responsibility for programs and services. Because most conditions measured here predate IDEC, this first edition is not an evaluation of the new Department. Rather, it establishes the starting point against which future performance can be measured.

Second, the report identifies areas where Illinois still lacks the information necessary to fully assess system performance. Future editions can therefore track both changes in early childhood outcomes and improvements in the State's capacity to measure the system itself.

The scorecard organizes the baseline across six domains, or major dimensions of early childhood system performance. These include 1) Child, Caregiver and Family Outcomes; 2) Access and Participation; 3) Quality and Inclusion; 4) Workforce and Provider Stability; 5) Financing and System Performance; and 6) Governance and System Functioning. Equity is examined throughout to show whether access, resources, and outcomes differ across populations and communities.

To summarize performance across a large number of indicators, the Civic Federation developed a scoring framework that assigns each measurable indicator a score based on a defined benchmark. Where possible, benchmarks draw on established federal or State targets, research-based standards, or other recognized measures of performance. Where no established benchmark exists, the scorecard uses a consistent threshold developed for this analysis. Indicator scores are then combined into domain scores and an overall System Index. The grades are intended as a tool for comparing performance across areas and tracking change over time, rather than as an external or independently established rating of Illinois' early childhood system.

Using this framework, Illinois received an overall System Index grade of C. Four domains received C grades, while Quality and Inclusion received a D and Financing and System Performance received an F. The separate Equity Index received a B, although substantial

disparities remain within individual measures. The table below summarizes the relative strengths and key challenges identified within each domain.

Domain	Score	Grade	Relative Strengths	Key Challenges
Child, Caregiver, and Family Outcomes	**48.9**	**C**	Social-emotional K readiness (57.5%); developmental screening (~50%); positive EI family experiences (~75%)	Only 29.9% K-ready in all areas; ECSE outcomes (41.8%); 20.5-pt EL readiness gap; Black preterm birth 1.59× White
Access and Participation	**59.5**	**C**	EI reach (5.64%, above Child Find target); 98.0% timely IFSPs; well-child visits (73.2%)	Infant/toddler slots (21.6 per 100); public preschool (30.5%); Head Start reach (27.1%); home visiting; rural capacity (77.9% of urban)
Quality and Inclusion	**38.9**	**D**	EI in natural environments (95.4%); low preschool expulsion (0.37%); mental health consultation	Only 23.5% of centers Silver/Gold; preschool inclusion (53.3%); no comparable equity data
Workforce and Provider Stability	**51.9**	**C**	Credentials (60.4% assoc.+); workforce diversity (~45% people of color); home visiting pay (91.9% of median)	18.8% provider decline; 31.5% turnover; wages at 54.2% of median; 19.0% EI vacancies
Financing and System Performance	**16.7**	**F**	None scored as strengths in the baseline	CCAP at 37.4% of market rate; PFA at $6,641/child (66.4% of benchmark); license-exempt rate gap; fragmented financial reporting
Governance and System Functioning	**58.3**	**C**	Public data transparency (IECAM, program reporting); growing equity focus in planning	Fragmented data; no common cross-program metrics; inconsistent disaggregation

Five key findings emerge from the Civic Federation's baseline assessment of Illinois' early childhood system.

1. Child and family outcomes are mixed and include substantial disparities. Social-emotional kindergarten readiness and families' reported experiences with Early Intervention (EI) are relative strengths, but overall kindergarten readiness remains low. Large gaps in kindergarten readiness and preterm birth also show why statewide averages alone are insufficient.

2. Access is uneven by program, age, and geography. Early Intervention (EI) access and preventive health care perform comparatively well, while licensed infant and toddler capacity and participation in publicly funded preschool, Head Start, Early Head Start, and home visiting remain limited. Relatively even distribution across communities does not necessarily mean that overall supply is adequate.

3. The scorecard identifies quality and inclusion as significant areas of challenge. Few licensed programs in the available data reach the higher levels of ExceleRate Illinois, the State's quality recognition and improvement system for early childhood programs. Only about half of preschool-aged children with disabilities captured by the federal inclusion measure are served in regular early childhood settings for at least 10 hours per week. Illinois performs better on some compliance and discipline measures, but the State has far less information about quality in Family, Friend, and Neighbor and other license-exempt care.

4. The workforce is relatively well qualified but unstable. Many staff in licensed programs have postsecondary credentials, and home visiting compensation approaches the statewide

median wage. However, child care wages remain low, turnover is high, the number of licensed providers has declined, and Early Intervention (EI) has a substantial vacancy rate.

5. Financing is the weakest-performing domain. Child care subsidy reimbursement and publicly funded preschool spending fall below the scorecard benchmarks, while Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers receive substantially lower reimbursement than licensed centers. Fragmented financial reporting also makes it difficult to determine where early childhood resources go and whether funding follows need.

The baseline also reveals an important limitation in Illinois' ability to evaluate the early childhood system. While the State collects substantial program-level data, the data is not yet integrated enough to provide a complete view of how children, families, and providers experience the system across programs and over time. Different programs use different definitions, reporting schedules, and data systems, and some important measures are not publicly available.

As a result, the scorecard identifies several areas where Illinois still cannot fully assess system performance. These include the quality of care outside licensed settings, families' actual child care cost burden, longitudinal outcomes across programs, the experiences of children involved in the child welfare system, home visiting capacity and utilization, workforce shortages by geography and profession, and the geographic distribution of early childhood funding.

These are not simply technical data limitations. They are accountability gaps. Without consistent and integrated information, policymakers and system leaders cannot readily determine whether new investments, program changes, or governance reforms are improving access, quality, outcomes, or equity, or whether improvements are reaching the populations and communities with the greatest needs.

This is one reason the Civic Federation intends for the scorecard to serve as a recurring evaluation tool rather than a one-time assessment. Future editions can use the same framework to track changes across the six domains while incorporating new measures as Illinois' data capacity improves. Key signs of progress will include expanded access where supply is most limited, greater availability of high-quality and inclusive care, improved workforce stability, more adequate and transparent financing, narrower disparities, and stronger system-wide reporting.

Over time, comparison with this initial baseline will help show whether consolidation under IDEC is translating into measurable improvements for children, families, and providers.

INTRODUCTION

The State of Illinois (Illinois, or the 'State') is in the midst of a major reorganization of its early childhood system. For decades, programs serving young children and families have been administered across multiple State agencies with separate eligibility requirements, funding streams, data systems, and accountability structures. The Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC) is intended to bring many of these programs and responsibilities into a more unified system that is easier for families and providers to navigate.

A baseline is necessary to determine whether that structural change leads to measurable improvements in access, quality, outcomes, workforce stability, financing, and system coordination. Because most conditions measured in this report predate IDEC, the scorecard is not an evaluation of the new Department. It establishes the starting point against which future progress can be assessed.

The Civic Federation developed the scorecard to provide a system-level view rather than evaluate any single program. It brings together indicators across six domains: 1) Child, Caregiver, and Family Outcomes; 2) Access and Participation; 3) Quality and Inclusion; 4) Workforce and Provider Stability; 5) Financing and System Performance; and 6) Governance and System Functioning. Equity is incorporated throughout the framework.

The scorecard is designed to be used as a recurring accountability tool. This first edition uses the most recent reasonably available data; future editions can apply the same framework to assess change over time.

The baseline also shows where Illinois cannot yet answer important policy questions. Gaps remain in areas such as affordability, quality outside licensed settings, cross-program outcomes, services for children involved in the child welfare system, and the distribution of early childhood resources across communities. Tracking whether these gaps close is therefore part of the scorecard's accountability function.

IDEC is developing new data infrastructure intended to address some of these limitations.[1] The Department is establishing an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) to bring previously fragmented early childhood data into a more unified system, standardize definitions, and support analysis across programs, populations, and geographies. IDEC is also developing public dashboards intended to improve access to early childhood information. As these tools develop, they may allow future editions of the scorecard to incorporate measures that cannot currently be calculated consistently.

Improving the State's ability to measure the early childhood system will be an important part of strengthening accountability and determining whether the transition to IDEC is producing meaningful improvements for children, families, and providers.

[1] Illinois Department of Early Childhood, Tech Talk, August, 2026.

HOW TO READ THE SCORECARD

The Early Childhood Scorecard is a system-level view of how Illinois serves young children and families. It examines metrics within six domains, or major dimensions, covering: outcomes, access, quality, workforce, financing, and governance. Together, they show not only whether services exist, but also the quality and stability, the resources supporting them, and the State's capacity to coordinate and evaluate the system.

TYPES OF INDICATORS

Within each domain, the scorecard includes several types of indicators. A complete list of indicators can be found in Appendix A. Level indicators measure the overall condition or performance of the system. These indicators answer questions such as how many children have access to licensed child care, what share of children participate in publicly funded preschool, or how early childhood educator wages compare with wages across the broader Illinois workforce.

Equity indicators examine whether access, resources, or outcomes differ across populations or communities. Depending on the availability of data, these measures compare outcomes by characteristics such as race and ethnicity, income, geography, or community poverty. Equity indicators are considered separately from the overall level of performance because an outcome can be relatively equitable without necessarily being adequate. For example, two groups may have similar access to child care slots while both have substantially fewer slots than are needed to serve their populations. Conversely, a program may perform relatively well statewide while significant disparities remain between groups.

Where applicable, the scorecard also includes measures that track performance against specific State or federal requirements. These measures provide important context for understanding system performance but should be distinguished from broader measures of whether Illinois is achieving desired outcomes for children and families.

SCORING THE INDICATORS

Each scored indicator is assigned a value from zero to three based on a defined benchmark:

- 3 – Excellent: the indicator meets or exceeds the scorecard's highest benchmark.
- 2 – Good: Performance is relatively strong but falls below the highest benchmark.
- 1 – Fair: Performance shows meaningful room for improvement.
- 0 – Poor: performance falls below the scorecard's minimum benchmark or indicates a significant area of concern.

Benchmarks vary by indicator because the measures describe different aspects of the early childhood system. Where possible, thresholds are informed by federal or State targets, established policy standards, research, or other relevant benchmarks. Where no established

target or standard exists, we developed thresholds for this analysis using the best available reference point. Depending on the indicator, thresholds were informed by national or peer benchmarks, research findings, observed distributions, parity standards for equity measures, or clearly defined qualitative criteria. The thresholds were designed to distinguish meaningful differences in performance and provide a consistent basis for tracking change over time. Where an initial benchmark did not meaningfully differentiate performance, the rubric was revised and documented in the methodology. The methodology can be found in Appendix B and C.

Indicator scores are aggregated to provide summary scores for each of the six domains and an overall system index. Equity indicators are also summarized separately in an equity index to provide a clearer picture of disparities across the system. These summary scores are intended to make patterns easier to identify across a large number of measures; they should not be interpreted as precise measures of performance of any single program, agency, or administration.

Because this is the first edition of the scorecard, the scores are most useful as a baseline for future comparison. A low score identifies an area in which Illinois currently falls short of the benchmark established in the scorecard but does not by itself identify the cause of the performance. Similarly, a high score does not necessarily mean that no further improvement is needed.

Data Availability and Phases

Not every indicator identified through the development of the scorecard can currently be calculated. Indicators are therefore organized into phases based on the availability of data.

Phase 1 indicators rely primarily on publicly available data and constitute the baseline presented in this report. Later-phase indicators will require additional administrative data, greater coordination among State agencies, or new data infrastructure before they can be reliably measured.

The absence of data itself is an important finding. In several areas, Illinois currently lacks the information necessary to answer basic questions about the early childhood system, including the quality of care received by many infants and toddlers, families' out-of-pocket child care costs, outcomes across multiple early childhood programs, and the experiences of children involved in the child welfare system. Rather than excluding these questions from the framework, the scorecard identifies them as future measures so that improvements in the State's data capacity can also be tracked over time.

Interpreting the Baseline

Several limitations are important to be aware of when interpreting the baseline. The scorecard combines State and federal sources that are updated on different schedules, so the most recent year varies by indicator. Statewide measures can also mask regional differences, and some settings and populations are better represented in existing data than others.

For those reasons, individual indicators should be read alongside the broader domain findings and underlying data. The scores are a tool for identifying patterns and areas requiring attention, not a complete description of any single program, agency, or administration.

As IDEC develops and Illinois' data infrastructure improves, future editions can add indicators, greater regional and demographic detail, and comparisons with this baseline.

OVERALL RESULTS

The baseline shows mixed performance across Illinois' early childhood system. The System Index score is 45.7 out of 100, or a C. Four domains received a C; Quality and Inclusion received a D; and Financing and System Performance received an F. The separate Equity Index is 63.9, or a B.

Baseline Results

Domain	Baseline Score	Grade
Child, Caregiver, & Family Outcomes	48.9	C
Access & Participation	59.5	C
Quality & Inclusion	38.9	D
Workforce & Provider Stability	51.9	C
Financing & System Performance	16.7	F
Governance & System Functioning	58.3	C
System Index	**45.7**	**C**
Equity Index	**63.9**	**B**

The scores summarize Phase 1 indicators that can be measured with currently available data. They should be interpreted as a baseline rather than a final assessment of the early childhood system or IDEC, particularly because many conditions predate the Department and several planned indicators cannot yet be calculated.

BASELINE FINDINGS

Child and family outcomes are mixed and include significant disparities. Child, Caregiver, and Family Outcomes received a C, with wide variation across indicators. Social-emotional kindergarten readiness and several measures of families' experiences with Early Intervention (EI) are relative strengths, while overall kindergarten readiness and some special education outcomes are weaker.

The domain also contains some of the baseline's largest disparities, including substantial differences in kindergarten readiness and a considerably higher preterm birth rate among Black infants than White infants.

Access, workforce, and governance score higher than quality and financing. Access and Participation, Governance and System Functioning, and Workforce and Provider Stability received the three highest domain scores. Similar grades, however, reflect different underlying conditions.

Access is strongest in Early Intervention (EI) and preventive health care, while licensed infant and toddler capacity and participation in public preschool, Head Start, Early Head Start, and home visiting are more limited.

Governance shows a similar mix of strengths and gaps: Illinois has substantial public program-level data, but different definitions and systems limit its ability to assess the early childhood system as a whole.

Measures of quality and inclusion represent a significant area for improvement. Quality and Inclusion received a score of 38.9, the second lowest of the six domains. Available indicators suggest that access to an early childhood program does not necessarily mean access to a higher-quality or inclusive setting. Less than one-quarter of licensed programs represented in available data were rated at the Silver or Gold levels of ExceleRate, the State's quality recognition and improvement system for early childhood programs, and approximately half of preschool-aged children with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) were being served in regular early childhood settings for at least 10 hours per week.

Illinois performs better on preschool suspension and expulsion and has infant and early childhood mental health consultation infrastructure in place. However, the State still lacks a complete picture of quality across settings, especially Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care and other license-exempt care.

Workforce qualifications are a relative strength, but compensation and stability remain challenges. The workforce domain reflects a central tension. Workers captured in the available data tend to have relatively strong credentials, but compensation, retention, and overall workforce stability remain weak. More than 60% of staff in licensed programs in the available data have an associate degree or higher.

At the same time, child care wages remain low, turnover is high, and the number of licensed providers has declined. The baseline suggests that Illinois has substantial workforce expertise but continuing difficulty retaining workers and maintaining provider capacity.

Financing is the weakest-performing domain in the baseline. Financing and System Performance received the lowest domain score. Child care subsidy payments do not consistently approach market prices, and Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care reimbursement remains substantially below licensed-center rates.

The financing score also reflects a major accountability gap. Illinois cannot yet consistently assess how early childhood resources are distributed across communities or distinguish system-wide spending patterns. The domain therefore captures both funding challenges and limits in financial transparency.

Equity results are stronger overall but should not be interpreted as evidence that access or outcomes are adequate. The Equity Index is higher than the overall System Index, but it should not be read as evidence that access or outcomes are adequate. Some measures show relatively small differences in the distribution of resources across communities, while other indicators reveal substantial disparities.

The distinction matters because groups can have similar access while both remain underserved. Equity measures should therefore be interpreted alongside the overall level of service and outcomes.

Overall, the baseline describes a system with established programs, workforce expertise, and meaningful data infrastructure, but persistent challenges in quality, inclusion, financing, workforce stability, and child outcomes. It also shows that Illinois' ability to measure the system remains uneven.

DOMAIN RESULTS

CHILD, CAREGIVER, AND FAMILY OUTCOMES

Baseline Domain Score: **48.9 / 100** **Grade: C**

Relative Strengths

- Social-emotional readiness is the highest KIDS area (57.5%)
- About half of children 9–35 months receive a developmental screening
- Roughly three-quarters of surveyed EI families report positive experiences

Key Challenges

- Only 29.9% of kindergarteners are ready in all three KIDS areas; math lags at 35.6%
- Only 41.8% of children exiting ECSE function within age expectations
- Large disparities: a 20.5-point EL readiness gap; Black preterm birth at 1.59× the White rate

What This Domain Measures

This domain asks whether children and families experience the developmental, educational, and family outcomes the early childhood system is intended to support. Indicators cover kindergarten readiness, developmental screening, Early Intervention (EI) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) outcomes, caregiver experiences with Early Intervention (EI), and maternal and infant health.

Baseline Results

Illinois received a score of 48.9 out of 100, or a C, in the Child, Caregiver, and Family Outcomes domain. Results are mixed. Within the scorecard, stronger measured areas include social-emotional kindergarten readiness, developmental screening, and families' experiences with Early Intervention (EI), while overall kindergarten readiness and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) outcomes are weaker.

In the 2023-2024 school year, 29.9% of Illinois kindergarteners were ready across all three KIDS developmental areas. Readiness was highest in social-emotional development at 57.5%, compared with 47.8% in language and literacy, and 35.6% in mathematics. Among children receiving Early Intervention (EI), 72.0% substantially increased their rate of growth across federally reported outcome areas, while 47.0% reached or maintained functioning closer to age expectations. Approximately 41.8% of children exiting Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) were functioning within age expectations.

Other indicators show areas of relative strength. Approximately 50% of children ages nine to 35 months received a developmental screening, and roughly three-quarters of surveyed Early Intervention (EI) families reported positive experiences with the program. These measures describe children and families who are already engaged with services and do not show whether all children who may need support are being identified and served.

Preterm birth provides an upstream measure of child health and developmental risk. In Illinois, 10.4% of live births were preterm, resulting in a Fair score under the scorecard framework.

BY THE NUMBERS

29.9%

of Illinois kindergarteners were ready across all three KIDS developmental areas in 2023-24

Highlighted from the Baseline Results above

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Baseline Value
Kindergarteners ready in all three KIDS areas (2023-24)	29.9%
KIDS readiness: social-emotional	57.5%
KIDS readiness: language and literacy	47.8%
KIDS readiness: mathematics	35.6%
EI children substantially increasing rate of growth	72.0%
EI children reaching/maintaining functioning closer to age expectations	47.0%
Children exiting ECSE functioning within age expectations	41.8%
Children ages 9–35 months receiving developmental screening	~50%
Surveyed EI families reporting positive experiences	~75%
Live births that were preterm	10.4%

Equity Findings

This domain contains some of the largest disparities in the scorecard. The largest kindergarten readiness gap was 20.5 percentage points, between English Learners and non-English Learners, and substantial differences also remain by income and race or ethnicity. Black infants experienced preterm birth at approximately 1.59 times the rate of White infants; both measures received Poor equity scores.

Differences in participation in Early Intervention (EI) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) were smaller, with a composite rate ratio of 1.26. However, similar participation rates do not establish that all children who need services are being reached because the State lacks a reliable estimate of expected eligibility by demographic group.

What the Data Shows—and What It Does Not

These measures do not explain why outcomes occur or allow direct comparisons across programs. Kindergarten readiness reflects experiences both inside and outside the formal early childhood system, while Early Intervention (EI) outcomes describe children already receiving services rather than all children who may need them.

Taken together, the measures establish a baseline of child and family conditions that can be tracked over time, not a direct measure of any one program's effectiveness.

Data Gaps and Future Measures

Gap	Why It Matters	Proposed Future Measure
EI referral-to-service pathway	Illinois reports EI enrollment and outcomes, but not the full path from developmental concern to referral, evaluation, eligibility, and service receipt.	Public reporting on referrals and timely evaluation, showing where children are lost between initial concern and enrollment.
Expected EI eligibility	Current EI enrollment cannot be compared with a reliable estimate of the infants and toddlers expected to benefit from services.	IFSP participation rate relative to expected prevalence.
Outcomes by demographic group	Comparable developmental outcome measures across EI, ECSE, and other programs are limited.	Greater cross-program linkage to examine whether children from different backgrounds experience similar outcomes once served.

What to Watch Moving Forward

Future editions of the scorecard will monitor:

Indicator	Baseline	Direction to Watch
Kindergarten readiness, all three KIDS areas	**29.9% (math: 35.6%)**	**Increase, particularly in mathematics**
Readiness gaps by income, language, race, and ethnicity	**Largest gap: 20.5 pts (EL vs. non-EL)**	**Narrow**
EI and ECSE developmental outcomes	**EI: 72.0% / 47.0%; ECSE: 41.8%**	**Improve**
Developmental screening, ages 9–35 months	**~50%**	**Increase**
Public measures of the EI referral, evaluation, and enrollment pipeline	**Not yet reported**	**Develop**
Black–White preterm birth disparity	**1.59× (Poor equity score)**	**Decline**

Domain Takeaway

Illinois enters the IDEC transition with mixed child and family outcomes. Relative strengths in social-emotional kindergarten readiness and families' Early Intervention (EI) experiences coexist with low overall kindergarten readiness and substantial disparities in readiness and preterm birth. Future editions should focus on whether both statewide outcomes and gaps between groups improve.

Access and Participation

Baseline Domain Score: 59.5/ 100 **Grade: C**

Relative Strengths

- 5.64% of children under 3 have an IFSP, exceeding the Child Find target
- 98.0% of initial IFSPs completed within 45 days
- 73.2% of Medicaid-enrolled children 0–5 had a well-child visit; capacity is similar across racial and poverty characteristics

Key Challenges

- Only 21.6 licensed slots per 100 infants and toddlers
- Public preschool reaches 30.5% of 3- and 4-year-olds; Head Start/EHS covers 27.1% of income-eligible children
- Rural areas have 77.9% of urban licensed capacity; home visiting reach is limited

What This Domain Measures

This domain asks whether children and families can access and participate in early childhood services. Indicators cover licensed child care, publicly funded preschool, Early Intervention (EI), Head Start and Early Head Start, well-child visits, and home visiting, as well as differences in access by race, income, and geography.

Access depends on more than whether a program exists. The scorecard therefore considers both overall reach and how services are distributed across populations and communities.

Baseline Results

Illinois received a score of 59.5 out of 100, or a C, in Access and Participation. Performance varies substantially by program and age group. Early Intervention (EI) and preventive health access are relative strengths, while licensed infant and toddler care, publicly funded preschool, Head Start and Early Head Start, and home visiting reach remain more limited.

Licensed child care capacity is substantially lower for infants and toddlers than for preschool-aged children. Illinois has approximately 21.6 licensed slots per 100 children ages birth through two, compared with 36.5 slots per 100 children ages three and four. Publicly funded preschool serves approximately 30.5% of Illinois three- and four-year-olds.

Early Intervention (EI) performs more strongly. Approximately 5.64% of children under age three have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), exceeding the State's Child Find target, and 98.0% of initial IFSPs were completed within the required 45-day timeline. Approximately 73.2% of Medicaid-enrolled children ages birth through five received at least one expected well-child visit.

By contrast, Head Start and Early Head Start funded capacity equals approximately 27.1% of income-eligible children, while home visiting serves approximately 1.12 families per 100 children ages birth through three. These measures capture capacity or participation and do not necessarily show whether families who need a service can obtain and use it.

BY THE NUMBERS

21.6

licensed child care slots per 100 children ages birth through two, compared with 36.5 for ages three and four

Highlighted from the Baseline Results above

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Baseline Value
Licensed slots per 100 children ages 0–2	21.6
Licensed slots per 100 children ages 3–4	36.5
3- and 4-year-olds in publicly funded preschool	30.5%
Children under 3 with an IFSP	5.6%
Initial IFSPs completed within 45 days	98.0%
Medicaid-enrolled children 0–5 with a well-child visit	73.2%
Head Start/EHS funded capacity, share of income-eligible children	27.1%
Home visiting families per 100 children ages 0–3	1.12
Rural licensed capacity as share of urban	77.9%

Equity Findings

Equity results are generally stronger than the domain's overall access results, but important differences remain. Licensed child care capacity is relatively similar across majority Black or Latino and majority White communities and across higher- and lower-poverty communities. Home visiting is also more concentrated in higher-need communities, consistent with the program's targeting.

Geographic and programmatic disparities are more pronounced. Rural communities have about 77.9% of the licensed capacity available in urban areas, and public preschool participation varies across demographic groups. These findings reinforce that relatively equitable distribution does not necessarily mean that overall access is sufficient.

What the Data Shows—and What It Does Not

The measures cannot show whether every family who needs or wants a service can use it. Slots may be unavailable, unaffordable, or mismatched with families' schedules or children's needs, and funded capacity does not necessarily equal enrollment.

For some programs, especially home visiting, the State also lacks a reliable estimate of the population likely to benefit, limiting the ability to judge whether current reach is adequate.

Data Gaps and Future Measures

Gap	Why It Matters	Proposed Future Measure
Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care	No reliable denominator exists for children in FFN care, so the share whose caregivers receive CCAP subsidies cannot be calculated.	Interim: number of subsidized children in FFN settings and number of FFN caregivers receiving coaching or training.
Home visiting utilization	Fragmented funding and data systems prevent a consistent statewide count of available capacity or eligible families.	A unified home visiting data system showing whether slots are filled and target families are reached.
Affordability	Slots may exist that families cannot afford; there is no statewide measure of out-of-pocket costs.	Out-of-pocket child care costs as a share of income; families who decline or leave care because of cost.
Regional reporting	Statewide averages conceal differences among Chicago, suburban, downstate, and rural communities.	The same indicators reported consistently by region.

What to Watch Moving Forward

Future editions of the scorecard will monitor:

Indicator	Baseline	Direction to Watch
Licensed infant and toddler capacity	**21.6 slots per 100**	**Increase, especially where shortages are greatest**
Public preschool participation, ages 3–4	**0.305**	**Increase; narrow subgroup gaps**
EI Child Find target	**5.64% (target exceeded)**	**Continue to meet or exceed**
Head Start/EHS reach	**27.1% of income-eligible children**	**Increase**
Rural licensed capacity	**77.9% of urban**	**Narrow the gap**
Home visiting utilization among eligible families	**Not yet measurable**	**Develop a reliable measure**
FFN participation and supports	**Not yet measurable**	**Improve measurement**
Child care affordability	**Not yet measured**	**Develop new measures**

Domain Takeaway

Illinois enters the IDEC transition with uneven access. Early Intervention (EI) and preventive health care are stronger measured areas, while licensed infant and toddler capacity, public preschool participation, and home visiting reach remain limited. Relatively even distribution across some communities should not be confused with adequate supply; future editions should track both expanded reach and narrower geographic and demographic gaps.

QUALITY AND INCLUSION

Baseline Domain Score: 38.9/ 100 Grade: D

Relative Strengths

- 95.4% of EI services occur in natural environments
- Preschool suspension and expulsion is down to about 0.37%
- About 3.1 credentialed mental health consultants per 1,000 children in licensed programs

Key Challenges

- Only 23.5% of licensed centers in survey data are rated Silver or Gold
- Only 53.3% of preschoolers with IEPs are in regular early childhood settings 10+ hours/week
- No comparable data to assess whether quality and inclusion differ by group or place

What This Domain Measures

This domain asks whether children who participate in the early childhood system experience high-quality, inclusive, and supportive settings. Indicators cover ExceleRate Illinois, preschool inclusion, Head Start monitoring, infant and early childhood mental health consultation, and preschool suspension and expulsion.

Existing data describe quality more fully in licensed and publicly funded settings than in other care arrangements, creating important blind spots for infants, toddlers, and children in FFN care.

Baseline Results

Illinois received a score of 38.9 out of 100, or a D, in Quality and Inclusion, making it the second-lowest scoring domain. The largest challenges are the share of licensed programs reaching higher ExceleRate levels and the inclusion of preschool-aged children with disabilities; mental health consultation and preschool suspension and expulsion perform more strongly.

Among licensed centers represented in available statewide survey data, 23.5% were rated at the Silver or Gold Circle of Quality, resulting in a Poor score. Approximately 53.3% of preschool-aged children with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) were served in regular early childhood settings for at least 10 hours per week, also receiving a Poor score. The ExceleRate measure is based on survey rather than complete administrative data and should be interpreted cautiously.

Illinois performs more strongly on several other measures. Approximately 95.4% of Early Intervention (EI) services occurred in natural environments, and the baseline identifies about 3.1 credentialed infant and early childhood mental health consultants per 1,000 children in licensed programs. Preschool suspension and expulsion was approximately 0.37%, a substantial decline from earlier levels.

The Head Start monitoring indicator is preliminary. In the available monitoring cycle, 43.5% of Illinois grantees had no findings of noncompliance, but federal monitoring distinguishes between areas of noncompliance and formal deficiencies. The measure should therefore be refined before being used to draw broader conclusions about Head Start quality.

BY THE NUMBERS

23.5%

of licensed centers in available survey data were rated at the Silver or Gold Circle of Quality

Highlighted from the Baseline Results above

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Baseline Value
Licensed centers rated Silver or Gold (ExceleRate, survey data)	23.5%
Preschoolers with IEPs in regular EC settings 10+ hrs/week	53.3%
EI services delivered in natural environments	95.4%
Credentialed IECMH consultants per 1,000 children in licensed	3.1
Preschool suspension and expulsion rate	0.4%
Head Start grantees with no noncompliance findings (preliminary)	43.5%

Equity Findings

The most important equity finding in this domain is the absence of comparable data. Illinois cannot yet determine consistently whether access to higher-rated programs, preschool inclusion, mental health consultation, or exclusionary discipline differs by race, ethnicity, income, or geography.

That lack of measurement should not be interpreted as evidence that disparities do not exist. Future versions of the scorecard will need more consistent geographic and demographic disaggregation to determine whether quality and inclusion supports are distributed equitably.

What the Data Shows—and What It Does Not

Illinois has several components of a statewide quality infrastructure, including ExceleRate, mental health consultation, preschool inclusion reporting, and restrictions on preschool suspension and expulsion. Those structures, however, do not ensure that every child experiences high-quality, inclusive care.

The data also describe licensed care far better than FFN and other license-exempt settings and do not consistently show whether quality and support resources are distributed according to need.

The domain score therefore reflects what Illinois can currently observe, not a comprehensive assessment of every child's experience.

Data Gaps and Future Measures

Gap	Why It Matters	Proposed Future Measure
Quality in FFN care	License-exempt providers do not participate in ExceleRate; INCCRRA tracks Gateways Training Tiers participation, but counts are not routinely public.	Share of CCAP-participating FFN providers engaged in the Training Tiers quality pathway.
Geographic access to higher-rated programs	County-level ExceleRate comparisons can mislead because Cook County's size dominates statewide ratios.	Access to Silver and Gold programs measured using finer geographic units.
Preschool inclusion disparities	The federal inclusion measure is not disaggregated.	Inclusion measure broken out by race, ethnicity, income, and geography.
Inclusion and health consultation	Supports for providers serving children with disabilities, health needs, or other specialized needs are not measured.	Number and geographic reach of credentialed consultants relative to the children and programs served.
Mental health consultation reporting	Consultant counts alone do not show where consultation happens or whether demand is met.	Where consultation occurs, which programs receive it, and whether demand is being met.

What to Watch Moving Forward

Future editions of the scorecard will monitor:

Indicator	Baseline	Direction to Watch
Licensed programs at Silver or Gold	**23.5% (survey data)**	**Increase**
Administrative ExceleRate measure	**Survey data only**	**Develop a more complete measure**
Preschoolers with IEPs in inclusive settings	**0.533**	**Increase**
Inclusion gaps by race, income, and geography	**Not yet measurable**	**Measure and narrow**
Mental health consultation capacity	**3.1 per 1,000 children**	**Expand and distribute more evenly**
Preschool suspension and expulsion	**0.0037**	**Continue to decline, including racial disparities**
FFN participation in quality pathways	**Not publicly reported**	**Measure and increase**
Health and inclusion consultation availability	**Not yet measured**	**Develop measures**

Domain Takeaway

Quality and Inclusion is one of the lowest-scoring domains in the scorecard. Illinois has quality, inclusion, and mental health support infrastructure, but relatively few licensed programs in the available data reach higher ExceleRate levels and only about half of preschool-aged children with disabilities captured by the federal measure are served in inclusive settings. A central accountability challenge is whether Illinois can improve these outcomes while also measuring quality across all types of care.

Workforce and Provider Stability

Baseline Domain Score: 51.9/ 100 Grade: C

Relative Strengths

- 60.4% of licensed-program staff hold an associate degree or higher in ECE or a related field
- About 45% of the workforce are people of color, meeting the highest benchmark
- Home visiting salaries reach 91.9% of the statewide median wage

Key Challenges

- Licensed child care providers declined 18.8% over five years
- 31.5% annual turnover; ECE wages are 54.2% of the statewide median
- 19.0% of funded EI positions vacant in SFY2026

What This Domain Measures

This domain asks whether Illinois has a stable, qualified, and adequately compensated workforce. Indicators cover provider counts, wages, turnover, education and credentials, workforce diversity, home visiting compensation, and Early Intervention (EI) vacancies.

Workforce conditions affect access and quality; low wages, turnover, vacancies, and provider closures can reduce capacity and disrupt relationships between children and caregivers.

Baseline Results

Illinois received a score of 51.9 out of 100, or a C, in Workforce and Provider Stability. The baseline shows a workforce with relatively strong education and credentials but significant challenges in compensation, turnover, vacancies, and provider stability.

Illinois experienced an 18.8% decline in licensed child care providers over the last five years, while the estimated annual child care workforce turnover rate was 31.5%. Median wages for the early childhood education workforce were approximately 54.2% of the statewide median wage for all occupations. Early Intervention (EI) also faces substantial staffing pressure, with approximately 19.0% of funded positions vacant in SFY2026.

Workforce qualifications are a relative strength. Approximately 60.4% of staff in licensed programs have an associate degree or higher in early childhood education or a related field, although only 22.4% of licensed-program teachers have a degree specifically in early childhood education or child development.

Conditions vary across segments of the workforce. Average home visiting salaries were approximately 91.9% of the statewide median wage, considerably stronger than child care

compensation. Taken together, the indicators suggest that Illinois has a relatively well-qualified workforce but continues to face challenges retaining workers and sustaining provider capacity.

BY THE NUMBERS

31.5%

estimated annual turnover in the Illinois child care workforce

Highlighted from the Baseline Results above

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Baseline Value
Decline in licensed child care providers (last five years)	18.8%
Estimated annual child care workforce turnover	31.5%
ECE median wage as share of statewide median wage	54.2%
EI funded positions vacant (SFY2026)	19.0%
Licensed-program staff with associate degree+ in ECE or related field	60.4%
Licensed-program teachers with ECE/child development degree	22.4%
Home visiting salary as share of statewide median wage	91.9%
Early childhood workers who are people of color	~45%

Equity Findings

Approximately 45% of Illinois early childhood workers are people of color, meeting the scorecard's highest benchmark for workforce representation. However, representation alone does not establish equity in compensation, and the State does not yet have sufficiently detailed data to compare wages among workers with similar credentials by race and ethnicity.

Provider losses also appear less concentrated in high-need communities. Those areas experienced a decline of approximately 16.5%, compared with 23.4% statewide. This does not mean high-need communities have sufficient capacity, particularly where supply was already limited.

What the Data Shows—and What It Does Not

The baseline shows a consistent tension between a relatively well-educated workforce and substantial instability in wages, turnover, provider numbers, and Early Intervention (EI) staffing.

The measures also show why the early childhood workforce should not be treated as a single labor market. Child care, home visiting, and Early Intervention (EI) rely on different funding and employment structures, so workforce pressures vary across sectors.

Important limits remain. Provider counts do not show changes in slot capacity or reasons for closure; turnover measures are not consistent across sectors; credential data largely exclude FFN caregivers; and the statewide Early Intervention (EI) vacancy rate does not identify the disciplines or regions facing the most severe shortages.

Data Gaps and Future Measures

Gap	Why It Matters	Proposed Future Measure
Compensation equity	Public data do not allow wages to be compared by race while controlling for education and credentials.	Credential-adjusted racial wage gap.
FFN workforce	FFN caregivers are missing from many workforce surveys and credential measures.	Training participation, compensation, and stability among subsidized FFN caregivers.
EI shortages by region and discipline	A statewide vacancy rate cannot show whether shortages concentrate in certain regions or disciplines (e.g., speech-language pathology, developmental therapy, occupational therapy).	Vacancy and service-delay data disaggregated by region and discipline.
Cross-program consistency	Child care, home visiting, and EI use different workforce datasets and reporting schedules.	Consistent recruitment, turnover, vacancy, and compensation measures across programs.

What to Watch Moving Forward

Future editions of the scorecard will monitor:

Indicator	Baseline	Direction to Watch
Licensed child care providers	**18.8% decline over five years**	**Slow or reverse**
Child care wages vs. statewide median	**0.542**	**Increase**
Child care workforce turnover	**0.315**	**Decline**
Teachers with ECE/child development-specific degrees	**0.224**	**Increase**
Home visiting compensation	**91.9% of statewide median**	**Remain competitive**
EI vacancy rate	**19.0% (SFY2026)**	**Decline**
EI vacancies by region and discipline	**Not reported**	**Begin reporting**
Compensation and advancement equity	**Not yet measurable (diversity ~45%)**	**Improve alongside diversity**
FFN workforce information	**Limited**	**Develop**

Domain Takeaway

Illinois enters the IDEC transition with a workforce with relatively strong measured credentials but substantial stability challenges. Low child care wages, high turnover, provider losses, and Early Intervention (EI) vacancies remain significant constraints. Future progress will depend on whether Illinois improves compensation, retention and staffing across the different sectors that sustain early childhood services.

FINANCING AND SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Baseline Domain Score: 16.7/ 100 Grade: F

Relative Strengths

- No financing indicators scored as strengths at baseline
- IDEC consolidation creates an opportunity for integrated financial reporting

Key Challenges

- CCAP reimbursement is 37.4% of the market-rate benchmark (Group 1A)
- Preschool for All spends $6,641 per child, 66.4% of the $10,000 benchmark
- License-exempt rate ($25.76) far below licensed center rate ($46.00); spending not reported by geography

What This Domain Measures

This domain asks whether Illinois provides sufficient and appropriate resources to support its early childhood system. Indicators cover public investment, child care subsidy payment adequacy, publicly funded preschool spending, and reimbursement differences between licensed and license-exempt care. Future measures are intended to show how resources are distributed across communities and between direct services and administration.

Financing affects nearly every other domain. Payment levels influence provider stability, workforce compensation, quality, and families' ability to access care. At the same time, appropriations alone do not show whether resources are adequate, efficiently administered or distributed according to need.

Baseline Results

Illinois received a score of 16.7 out of 100, or an F, making Financing and System Performance the lowest-scoring domain. Available measures frequently fall below the scorecard benchmarks, while fragmented financial reporting limits the State's ability to assess the early childhood system as a whole.

Estimated public early childhood investment falls substantially below the scorecard's adequacy benchmark, although the measure is necessarily approximate because funding is spread across multiple State and federal sources. More integrated reporting through IDEC could improve the precision of this measure over time.

Payment adequacy is also a significant challenge. In the Chicago metropolitan region represented by Group 1A, CCAP reimbursement for preschool-aged children equals

approximately 37.4% of the 75th-percentile market-rate benchmark. Preschool for All spending was approximately $6,641 per child, or 66.4% of the scorecard's $10,000 benchmark.

Reimbursement also varies substantially by type of care. Effective July 2025, the full-day license-exempt CCAP rate was $25.76, compared with $46.00 for licensed center care for a preschool-aged child in Group 1A. The comparison does not imply identical operating costs, but it shows that public reimbursement can differ considerably depending on the care arrangement a family uses.

BY THE NUMBERS

37.4%

CCAP preschool reimbursement in the Chicago region (Group 1A) as a share of the 75th-percentile market-rate benchmark

Highlighted from the Baseline Results above

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Baseline Value
CCAP preschool reimbursement vs. 75th-percentile market rate (Group 1A)	37.4%
Preschool for All spending per child	$6,641
Full-day license-exempt CCAP rate (July 2025, Group 1A)	$25.76
Full-day licensed center CCAP rate, preschool-aged (July 2025, Group 1A)	$46.00
Estimated public early childhood investment	Substantially below benchmark

Equity Findings

The financing domain currently has no Phase 1 scored equity indicators. Illinois does not publish early childhood spending in a format that allows consistent comparison of per-child investment or contracting across communities with different levels of need. The baseline therefore cannot determine whether resources are distributed equitably; it identifies a significant financial transparency and accountability gap rather than evidence of inequitable distribution.

What the Data Shows—and What It Does Not

These measures do not provide a complete picture of early childhood financing. Illinois' early childhood programs draw on multiple State and federal funding streams, and spending information is reported separately across programs and agencies. As a result, it is difficult to determine the total amount of public funding reaching an individual community or to connect spending consistently with access, quality, and outcomes.

The indicators also measure different dimensions of financing and should not be interpreted interchangeably. A market-rate comparison assesses how a subsidy payment relates to prevailing prices, while a per-child spending benchmark attempts to assess the resources available to support program quality. Neither measure alone establishes the actual cost of delivering a particular service.

Data Gaps and Future Measures

Gap	Why It Matters	Proposed Future Measure
Where dollars go	No single public source shows early childhood funding across programs, funding streams, and geographic areas.	Integrated financial reporting comparing investment with child population, poverty, service use, and community need.
Direct services vs. administration	This information is spread across agency budgets and program documents.	Share of resources for direct services vs. administration, reported through IDEC.
Home visiting spending	Funding flows through multiple sources, and there is no Illinois adequacy benchmark per enrolled family.	Spending per enrolled family, once a consistent methodology and benchmark are established.
Geographic financing equity	Expenditures and grants are not reported by geography.	Annual expenditures and grants by county or another consistent geographic unit.

What to Watch Moving Forward

Future editions of the scorecard will monitor:

Indicator	Baseline	Direction to Watch
CCAP reimbursement vs. market rate (Group 1A)	**0.374**	**Move closer to benchmark**
Preschool for All spending per child	**$6,641 (66.4% of benchmark)**	**Increase**
License-exempt vs. licensed reimbursement	**$25.76 vs. $46.00 per day**	**Narrow where appropriate**
Total early childhood spending accounting	**Fragmented**	**IDEC develops complete accounting**
Investment by geography	**Not published**	**Begin publishing**
Funding compared with community need	**Not currently possible**	**Enable comparison**
Home visiting spending	**Not consistently calculable**	**Calculate across funding streams**
Direct services vs. administrative costs	**Not distinguishable**	**Report separately**

Domain Takeaway

Financing and System Performance is the lowest-scoring domain in the scorecard. Available measures indicate that subsidy payments and preschool spending fall below the scorecard benchmarks, while reimbursement differs substantially by type of care. Just as important, fragmented financial reporting limits the State's ability to determine where resources go and whether they align with community need.

GOVERNANCE AND SYSTEM FUNCTIONING

Baseline Domain Score: 58.3/ 100 Grade: C

Relative Strengths

- Substantial public data, including IECAM and program reporting for EI, preschool, and child care
- Meaningful capacity to disaggregate some data by geography, race, ethnicity, and poverty
- Equity increasingly explicit in State planning

Key Challenges

- Data fragmented across separate sources, definitions, and reporting periods
- No common set of cross-program measures
- Disaggregation inconsistent; equity commitments not yet measurable targets

What This Domain Measures

This domain asks whether Illinois has the structures needed to operate and evaluate early childhood programs as a coordinated system. Indicators cover public data transparency, common measures, geographic and demographic coverage, and the integration of equity into planning and performance.

The indicators are especially relevant during the transition to IDEC. Consolidation creates an opportunity to align definitions, data systems, performance measures, and public reporting that historically developed separately. The baseline primarily reflects the infrastructure IDEC is inheriting, not the Department's long-term performance.

Baseline Results

Illinois received a score of 58.3 out of 100, or a C, in Governance and System Functioning. The State has meaningful public data and program-level accountability infrastructure, but information remains fragmented across programs and agencies and is not yet organized into a fully integrated system-level framework.

Data transparency is a relative strength. Illinois maintains statewide and program-specific resources, including IECAM and reporting for Early Intervention (EI), public preschool, and licensed child care. However, users must still navigate separate sources, definitions, and reporting periods to understand different parts of the early childhood system.

Illinois performs less strongly on common metrics across programs. Some programs use related federal outcome frameworks, but the State does not yet report consistently across a

common set of child, family, access, quality, and workforce measures. This limits the ability to follow experiences across programs or answer system-level questions.

Equity Findings

Illinois has meaningful capacity to disaggregate some early childhood data by geography, race, ethnicity, and poverty, and equity is increasingly reflected in State planning. However, the level of detail is inconsistent across programs and indicators, preventing the same equity analysis from being applied across the system.

The next step is to translate equity commitments into consistent, measurable targets. Stronger accountability would require the State to report comparable outcomes across groups and track whether disparities narrow over time.

What the Data Shows—and What It Does Not

Illinois is not starting from scratch. The State has substantial program-level data, public reporting infrastructure, and experience collecting information across early childhood programs. Equity is also an increasingly explicit part of planning.

The limitation is fragmentation. Programs use different definitions, reporting schedules, geographic units and outcomes, so public data answer many program-specific questions more readily than system-level ones.

Governance indicators also differ from most other measures because they rely more heavily on qualitative assessment. The score should therefore be read as a baseline of Illinois' governance and data infrastructure, not as a precise measure of IDEC's performance.

Data Gaps and Future Measures

Gap	Why It Matters	Proposed Future Measure
Integrated data systems	Program data are not structured to examine children, families, providers, or communities consistently across programs.	Integrated data systems across early childhood programs.
Home visiting data	Multiple models and funding streams use different administrative and reporting structures.	Whether IDEC develops a unified data platform covering home visiting programs and funders.
Common indicators	Key concepts such as access, participation, workforce stability, family experience, and equity are not aligned across programs.	A common set of system-level indicators and definitions.
Data linkage	Public reporting mostly provides snapshots of individual programs.	Linked data showing how children move among services and longer-term outcomes.
Public accountability	There is no consolidated statewide performance reporting.	A consolidated dashboard or recurring public performance report with common indicators and targets.

What to Watch Moving Forward

Future editions of the scorecard will monitor:

Indicator	Baseline	Direction to Watch
Unified public early childhood data portal	**Separate sources**	**Develop**
Downloadable, regularly updated program data	**Varies by program**	**Expand**
Common system-level measures	**Not established**	**Establish**
Geographic, racial, ethnic, and economic disaggregation	**Inconsistent**	**Expand to more indicators**
Measurable equity targets	**Not yet set**	**Set and publicly report**
Integrated home visiting data	**Fragmented**	**Integrate across models and funders**
Cross-program data linkage	**Limited**	**Strengthen**
Recurring public performance framework	**None**	**Establish**

Domain Takeaway

Illinois enters the IDEC transition with meaningful data and accountability infrastructure, but not yet an integrated system. The central governance challenge is to turn separate program data into common, transparent measures that can show how children, families, and providers experience the system across programs and over time.

CROSS-CUTTING DATA GAPS

Despite substantial program-level reporting, Illinois still lacks a complete system-wide view of early childhood services. The most significant gaps cut across multiple domains:

- Affordability for families;
- Quality outside licensed settings;
- Longitudinal outcomes across programs;
- Geographic variation in workforce and service capacity; and
- The distribution of funding relative to community need.

These gaps limit the State's ability to determine not only how individual programs are performing, but whether the early childhood system is becoming more accessible, equitable, and effective as a whole. Future scorecard editions should therefore track both changes in outcomes and improvements in the State's capacity to measure them consistently across programs and communities.

WHAT TO WATCH AS IDEC TAKES SHAPE

This baseline captures Illinois' early childhood system during a major institutional transition. Most conditions measured here predate IDEC, so future editions will be most useful for showing what changes as programs, funding, and administrative responsibilities move into a more unified structure.

No single indicator will determine whether the transition succeeds. Progress should be assessed across access, quality and inclusion, workforce stability, financing, equity, and the State's ability to measure performance.

Six questions should guide future editions:

Whether Access Expands Where Supply Is Most Limited. The baseline shows that access varies by age, program and geography. Future editions should ask whether capacity and participation grow where shortages are greatest, especially for infants and toddlers and in underserved communities. Statewide growth alone will be insufficient if geographic or demographic gaps persist. Early Intervention (EI) should also be assessed beyond enrollment and initial IFSP timeliness, including whether service delays decline after eligibility is established.

Whether Quality Improves Alongside Access. Expanding slots is only part of system improvement. Future editions should ask whether more providers reach higher quality levels, more children with disabilities are served in inclusive settings, and Illinois can measure quality outside licensed care. The key question is whether Illinois expands access to high-quality and inclusive care, not access alone.

Whether Workforce Conditions Become More Sustainable. Future editions should ask whether child care wages improve, turnover, and provider losses slow, and Early Intervention (EI) vacancies decline, while home visiting compensation remains competitive. If workforce conditions improve, the effects should also appear in greater capacity, fewer service delays, and more consistent quality.

Whether Financing Becomes More Adequate and Transparent. Future editions should ask whether CCAP reimbursement and preschool funding move closer to relevant benchmarks and whether reimbursement differences across care types change over time. They should also assess whether IDEC provides a clearer picture of total early childhood spending, geographic distribution, and the relationship between funding and community need. Greater financial transparency will be a key sign that Illinois is moving from separate program budgets toward system-level accountability.

Whether Persistent Disparities Narrow. Future editions should ask whether statewide outcomes improve and whether the groups with the weakest outcomes make faster progress. Gains in an overall score could mask widening disparities if improvement is concentrated among children or communities already better served. Equity should continue to be interpreted alongside adequacy; similar access across groups can coexist with insufficient access for everyone.

Whether IDEC Creates a More Integrated Data and Accountability System. IDEC also creates an opportunity to improve how Illinois measures the system itself. Future editions should track whether the State develops common definitions, more integrated reporting and better linkage across programs and over time. The baseline demonstrates that Illinois already has substantial program-level information, but reporting remains fragmented. Future editions should track whether IDEC develops common measures, consistent definitions and more integrated public reporting across programs. Better data is not simply an administrative achievement. It is necessary to determine whether policy and funding changes improve outcomes and whether problems are concentrated among particular populations or communities.

Whether Structural Consolidation Produces Measurable Change. The central question is whether consolidation under IDEC produces changes that children, families, and providers can experience and the State can measure. Organizational change can improve coordination, but it does not guarantee better outcomes. Future scorecards should distinguish changes in administrative structure from changes in access, quality, workforce conditions, financing, equity, and outcomes. Evidence of progress would include easier access to needed services, more high-quality and inclusive care, a more stable workforce, more adequate and transparent financing, narrower disparities, and data capable of demonstrating those changes.

This first edition establishes the starting point for measuring that progress.

CONCLUSION

Illinois is entering a new phase in its early childhood system. By bringing programs and responsibilities that were historically divided across agencies into the Illinois Department of Early Childhood, the State has created an opportunity for greater coordination. This scorecard establishes the baseline against which that transition can be assessed.

The baseline is mixed. Illinois has established statewide programs, substantial workforce expertise and meaningful program-level data infrastructure. At the same time, quality and inclusion and financing are particular weaknesses; workforce stability remains a challenge; access varies by program, age, and geography; and several child and family outcomes show substantial room for improvement.

The results also reinforce a central distinction between equity and adequacy. Some resources are distributed relatively evenly even when overall supply is insufficient, while other measures show substantial disparities. Future assessments should therefore track both statewide performance and gaps between groups.

A second central finding is that Illinois still lacks the integrated data needed to answer several basic system-level questions. Closing gaps in affordability, workforce, service pathways, funding distribution, and cross-program outcomes will be essential to stronger accountability.

The scorecard is not a final judgment on IDEC or Illinois' early childhood system. It is a starting point whose value will grow as measures are updated, new data becomes available, and trends can be assessed against this baseline.

Ultimately, success will be measured not by consolidation itself, but by whether children and families can access high-quality, inclusive services; providers and workers can remain in the system; public resources are adequate and equitably distributed; disparities narrow; and Illinois can demonstrate those changes through transparent, reliable data.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COMPLETE SCORECARD

The tables in this appendix present the full set of indicators used in the scorecard, organized by domain. Each domain is shown in a separate table and includes the indicator definition, most recent available value, score, benchmark or threshold, data source and relevant notes. Equity and compliance indicators are identified within the applicable domain.

These tables provide the detailed information underlying the domain scores and overall System Index discussed in the report.

Child, Caregiver, and Family Outcomes			
Type	**Indicator**	**Value / Indicator**	**Score**
Level	Kindergarten readiness — overall (%)	29.9	1
Level	Kindergarten readiness — literacy (%)	47.8	2
Level	Kindergarten readiness — math (%)	35.6	1
Level	Kindergarten readiness — social-emotional (%)	57.5	3
Level	EI outcomes — SS1 composite (% substantially increasing, avg of 3 outcome domains)	72	2
Level	EI outcomes — SS2 composite (% not regressed, avg of 3 outcome domains)	47	1
Level	ECSE outcomes — within age expectations at exit (%)	41.84	0
Level	Developmental screening rate — % children 9-35 months screened	50	2
Level	Preterm birth rate (% live births <37 weeks)	10.4	1
Level	Caregiver knowledge of rights and services — EI families (APR Indicator 4, % positive response)	74.11	2
Level	Family-centered EI service experience — % EI families rating services as helpful (APR Indicator 4)	76.51	2
Level	Caregiver knowledge of child development — families able to help child develop/learn (APR Ind. 4 / MIECHV)	73.82	2
Equity	KIDS readiness gap — largest racial/income gap (pp)	20.5	0
Equity	EI/ECSE service disparities — composite rate ratio	1.26	3
Equity	Preterm birth — Black vs White disparity ratio	1.59	0
Domain score (0–100 index)			**48.89**

Access & Participation			
Type	**Indicator**	**Value / Indicator**	**Score**
Level	Licensed EC capacity — infant/toddler (slots per 100 children 0–2)	21.6	1
Level	Licensed EC capacity — preschool (slots per 100 children 3–4)	36.5	2
Level	Preschool participation (% of 3–4 year-olds in public programs)	30.5	1
Level	Early Intervention access — Child Find (% birth–3 with IFSPs)	5.64	3
Level	Head Start / Early Head Start — funded slots as % of income-eligible children	27.1	1
Level	Well-child visit completion — EPSDT (Medicaid children 0-5, % receiving at least 1 visit/year)	73.2	2
Level	Home visiting — enrolled families per 100 children 0–3	1.12	0
Level	Early Intervention IFSP Timeliness	98	2
Equity	Access to slots by race — majority Black/Latino vs White areas (ratio)	0.991	3
Equity	Access to slots by poverty — high vs low poverty areas (ratio)	0.962	3
Equity	Public preschool participation gaps — largest subgroup gap (pp)	13	1
Equity	Geographic access equity — rural vs urban capacity (ratio)	0.779	1
Equity	Home visiting access equity — enrolled per 100 in high-poverty/majority-minority areas vs statewide (ratio)	1.28	3
Equity	EI access by income — % active IFSP children covered by Medicaid	44.6	2
Domain score (0–100 index)			**59.5**

Quality and Inclusion			
Type	**Indicator**	**Value / Indicator**	**Score**
Level	ExceleRate quality distribution — % licensed programs at Silver or Gold	23.5	0
Compliance	ExceleRate participation — % licensed providers enrolled at any level	100	"C"
Level	Inclusion in preschool — LRE Indicator B6 (% IEP children in regular ECE ≥10 hrs)	53.26	0
Level	Services in natural environments — EI (% children in natural settings)	95.4	3
Level	Head Start quality — % programs with no federal deficiencies (most recent monitoring cycle)	43.50	0
Level	IECMH consultation reach — credentialed consultants per 1,000 licensed-program children	3.1	2
Level	Preschool suspension/expulsion rate — % of EC program children (ages 3-5) suspended or expelled	0.37	2
Domain score (0–100 index)			**38.9**

Workforce and Provider Stability			
Type	**Indicator**	**Value / Indicator**	**Score**
Level	Number of licensed providers — 5-year % change	-18.8	**0**
Level	Child care workforce wages — ECE median as % of IL state median	54.20	**0**
Level	ECE-specific credential — % licensed-program teachers with degree in ECE/child development	22.40	**1**
Level	Child care workforce annual turnover rate (%)	31.5	**1**
Level	Workforce credential level — % of licensed-program staff with AA or higher in ECE/related field	60.4	**3**
Level	Workforce racial/ethnic diversity — % of ECE workers who are people of color	45	**3**
Level	Home visiting workforce wages — median HV worker wage as % of IL state median	91.9	**3**
Level	EI Workforce Vacancy Rate	19.0	**0**
Equity	Provider distribution in high-need communities — loss rate difference (pp)	-1.5	**3**
Domain score (0–100 index)			**51.9**

Financing and System Performance			
Type	**Indicator**	**Value / Indicator**	**Score**
Level	Total public ECE investment per child 0–5 (% of adequacy benchmark)	34.5	**0**
Level	CCAP payment adequacy — % of 75th percentile market rate (Group 1A, preschool)	37.4	**0**
Level	PFA state spending per child vs adequacy benchmark (% of $10k)	66.4	**1**
Level	FFN payment rate adequacy — CCAP license-exempt rate as % of licensed center rate (same age/region)	56	**1**
Domain score (0–100 index)			**16.7**

Governance and System Functioning			
Type	**Indicator**	**Value / Indicator**	**Score**
Level	Data transparency and integration — dashboard + downloadable program data	2	**2**
Level	Use of common metrics across agencies — shared outcome/quality tools	1	**1**
Equity	Geographic and racial coverage of data systems	2	**2**
Equity	Equity integration in planning and targets — # domains with equity metrics	2	**2**
Domain score (0–100 index)			**58.3**

APPENDIX B: SCORING METHODOLOGY

Indicator Selection Criteria

Indicators were selected to provide a broad, system-level picture of early childhood conditions in Illinois while maintaining consistency, transparency, and feasibility. The framework prioritizes indicators that are measurable statewide, meaningful for policy and system planning, and grounded in publicly available or reasonably obtainable sources. Several criteria guided indicator selection.

Publicly Available or Reasonably Obtainable

The scorecard prioritizes indicators that can be consistently replicated using publicly available state and federal datasets, administrative reporting, or data that could reasonably be obtained through standard agency requests. This approach was intended to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and the ability to update the scorecard over time without requiring entirely new data collection systems.

Meaningful Measures of System Performance

Indicators were selected based on their ability to reflect system conditions, service access, quality, workforce stability, financing, or child and family outcomes. Preference was given to indicators that measure how the system in functioning rather than simply describing the population being served.

Where possible, indicators were chosen because they capture conditions that policymakers, agencies, providers, and advocates can influence through policy, funding, coordination, or implementation changes.

Policy Relevance

The framework emphasizes indicators that align with major state and federal early childhood policy priorities, including school readiness, Early Intervention (EI) (EI) access, workforce stability, equity, inclusion, quality improvement, and system coordination. Indicators were also selected based on their relevance to Illinois' transition to the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC) and broader discussions about governance reform, accountability, and long-term system planning.

Avoiding Purely Demographic Indicators

The scorecard intentionally avoids using demographic characteristics as performance measures. Demographic context is important for interpreting need and understanding disparities, but these measures do not themselves reflect system performance.

Instead, the framework focuses on how effectively the early childhood system responds to varying levels of need across populations and communities.

Phased Structure

The scorecard uses a three-phase structure to distinguish between indicators currently scored, indicators where data exists but are not yet publicly accessible, and indicators for which no usable data infrastructure currently exists.

Phase 1 indicators are fully scored using verified public data.

Phase 2 indicators represent measured where data likely exists within agency administrative systems but require formal requests, data matching, or additional processing.

Phase 3 indicators represent broader infrastructure gaps where no current system collects usable statewide data.

Pending indicators are excluded from score calculations rather than treated as zeros. As a result, current domain scores likely understate the full scope of system challenges, particularly in areas where data collection itself remains limited.

Equity Integration Approach

The Equity Index aggregates indicators that explicitly measure disparities across racial, geographic, or income groups.

These indicators include:

- Readiness gaps,
- Slot access disparities,
- Workforce diversity,
- Provider distribution,
- Home visiting equity, and
- Preterm birth disparities.

The Equity Index should not be interpreted as a standalone summary of overall system equity. Instead, it is intended to complement the broader domain scores.

A state may perform relatively well overall while still maintaining large disparities between groups. The Equity Index is designed to capture those differences directly.

Several additional equity measures remain Phase 2 pending indicators and may substantially affect future Equity Index scores once data becomes available.

Scoring Methodology

Each scorecard indicator is scored on a four-point scale (0-Poor, 1-Fair, 2-Good, 3-Excellent). Domain scores are calculated as the average of all scored indicators within a domain and converted to a 0-100 index. The System Index is the unweighted average of the six domain scores. Indicators without available data are excluded from score calculations and are identified as Phase 2 or Phase 3 pending indicators.

Letter grades are assigned as follows:

- A: 82-100
- B: 62-82
- C: 42-62
- D: 22-42
- F: 0-22

The grading structure is intended to distinguish between systems that are consistently strong across indicators and those with widespread performance challenges.

Threshold Calibration Principles

Thresholds were calibrated using a consistent hierarchy of benchmarks. Federal or statutory targets were used where meaningful targets already existed. In areas without formal targets, thresholds were benchmarked against national averages, peer-state performance, or established policy standards.

For absolute performance indicators, the Excellent threshold reflects a level that is ambitious but achievable based on current state performance nationally or Illinois' stated policy goals. Good generally reflects performance near the national average. Fair indicators meaningful but insufficient progress, while Poor reflects performance levels that signal substantial system challenges.

For equity indicators, thresholds were structured around the size of disparities or parity ratios. Excellent reflects near parity across groups, while Poor reflects large and persistent disparities.

Compliance Baselines vs. Scored Indicators

One indicator is classified as compliance baselines rather than scored indicators because it consistently approach universal compliance and therefore provide little meaningful variation in performance.

ExceleRate Participation

Participation in ExceleRate is mandatory for licensed providers in Illinois. Universal participation therefore does not reflect program quality. Instead, the scorecard focuses on the distribution of programs across ExceleRate quality tiers.

This indicator remains visible in the scorecard as compliance tracking measure but is excluded from domain averages.

APPENDIX C: SCORING THRESHOLDS

Scoring Thresholds				
Indicator Name	**Excellent (3)**	**Good (2)**	**Fair (1)**	**Poor (0)**
Licensed EC capacity vs population — infant/toddler	≥50 slots/100 children	35–49	20–34	<20
Licensed EC capacity vs population — preschool (3–4)	≥50 slots/100 children	35–49	20–34	<20
Preschool participation (3–4 year-olds)	≥60% enrolled in public pre-K	40–59%	25–39%	<25%
Early Intervention access — Child Find (Indicator 6)	≥0.5 pts above target	At target	Within 0.2 pts below	Below target or declining
Services in natural environments — EI (Indicator 2)	≥95%	90–94%	80–89%	<80%
Access to slots by race — majority Black/Latino vs White areas	Ratio ≥0.95	Ratio 0.90–0.94	Ratio 0.75–0.89	Ratio <0.75
Access to slots by poverty — high vs low poverty areas	Ratio ≥0.95	Ratio 0.90–0.94	Ratio 0.75–0.89	Ratio <0.75
Public preschool participation gaps — largest subgroup gap	Gap <5 pp	Gap 5–9 pp	Gap 10–19 pp	Gap ≥20 pp
Geographic access equity — rural vs urban capacity	Rural ≥0.95 of urban	Rural 0.90–0.94	Rural 0.75–0.89	Rural <0.75
Home visiting slots vs population	≥10 slots/100	7–9	4–6	<4
Home visiting access — geographic and racial equity	Ratio ≥0.95	Ratio 0.90–0.94	Ratio 0.75–0.89	Ratio <0.75
EI timeliness — average days from referral to IFSP	≤45 days avg	46–60 days	61–90 days	>90 days
EI transition planning completeness — Indicator 8C	≥5 pts above target	At/≤5 pts above	Within 2 pts below	>2 pts below or declining
Head Start / Early Head Start — funded slots vs income-eligible children	≥40% of eligible children served	28–39% (≈national avg)	15–27%	<15%
Well-child visit completion — EPSDT (Medicaid children 0-5)	≥80%	70–79%	55–69%	<55%
Developmental screening rate	≥65% screened	50–64%	35–49%	<35%
Preterm birth rate	≤9.4% (HP2030 goal)	9.4–10%	10–11%	>11%
Preterm birth — Black vs White racial disparity ratio	≤1.1 (near parity)	1.1–1.3	1.3–1.5	>1.5
Kindergarten readiness (overall)	≥45% (state aspiration)	35–44%	25–34%	<25%
EI child outcomes — SS1 (avg 3 outcomes)	≥5 pts above target	At/≤5 pts above	Within 2 pts below	>2 pts below or slippage
ECSE child outcomes — within age expectations at exit	≥5 pts above target	At/≤5 pts above	Within 2 pts below	>2 pts below or slippage
KIDS readiness gap — largest racial/income gap	Gap <5 pp	Gap 5–9 pp	Gap 10–19 pp	Gap ≥20 pp
EI/ECSE service disparities — participation rate ratio	Both ≥0.95 of White rate	Both ≥0.90	Ratio 0.75–0.89	Ratio <0.75
Early outcome equity across domains	All groups within 5 pts	All within 10 pts	Some 10–19 pts below	Any ≥20 pts below avg
Caregiver knowledge of rights and services	≥80% positive response	65–79%	50–64%	<50%
Family-centered EI service experience	≥85% rate services as helpful	75–84%	65–74%	<65%
Total public ECE investment per child (0–5)	≥100% of $10k quality benchmark	80–99%	65–79%	<65%
CCAP payment adequacy vs 75th percentile market rate	≥110% of 75th pctile	100–109%	80–99%	<80%
PFA state spending per child vs adequacy	≥100% of $10k quality standard	80–99%	65–79%	<65%
FFN payment rate adequacy — CCAP reimbursement vs market	≥80% of licensed rate	65–79%	50–64%	<50%
Data transparency and integration	Dashboard live + ≥5 programs	Dashboard + ≥4 programs	Partial/2–3 programs	No dashboard/≤1
Use of common metrics across agencies	Shared domains + aligned tools + joint reporting	Shared domains + aligned tools	Shared domains, different tools	Little shared metrics
Geographic and racial coverage of data systems	Statewide + all fields + public API	Statewide + standard fields	Partial coverage/fields	Minimal disaggregation
Equity integration in planning and targets	Equity targets in 5+ domains	Targets in ≥4 domains	Targets in 2–3 domains	Targets in 0–1 domains
ExceleRate quality distribution — % Silver or Gold	≥70% Silver/Gold	60–69%	40–59%	<40%
ExceleRate participation — % licensed providers enrolled	≥85%	75–84%	50–74%	<50%
Inclusion in preschool — LRE (Indicator B6)	≥85%	75–84%	60–74%	<60%
Head Start quality — % programs with no federal deficiencies	≥90%	80–89%	65–79%	<65%
IECMH consultation reach — credentialed consultants per 1,000 enrolled children	≥5 per 100 programs	3.0-4.99	2.0-2.99	<2.0
Preschool suspension and expulsion rate	0% (law compliance)	≤0.5%	≤1.5%	>1.5%
Number of licensed providers — 5-year trend	Net growth ≥5%	Growth 0–4.9% or ≤5% decline	6–14% decline	≥15% decline
Child care workforce wages — % of state median	≥75% of all-occupations median	65–74%	55–64%	<55%
Workforce credentials — ExceleRate participation	≥85%	75–84%	50–74%	<50%
Provider distribution — high-need vs overall loss rate	High-need loss rate better than statewide	High-need ≤ statewide rate	Up to 10 pp worse	≥10 pp worse
Home visiting workforce wages	≥90% of state median	80–89%	60–79%	<60%
Child care workforce annual turnover rate	≤15%	16–25%	26–35%	>35%
Workforce credential level — % with AA or higher in ECE/related field	≥60%	40–59%	25–39%	<25%
Workforce racial/ethnic diversity — % who are people of color	≥40%	30–39%	20–29%	<20%

APPENDIX D: DATA SOURCES

Data Sources	
Indicator	**Data Source**
Licensed EC capacity vs population — infant/toddler	IECAM statewide dashboard + ACS population
Licensed EC capacity vs population — preschool (3–4)	IECAM statewide dashboard + ACS population
Preschool participation (3–4 year-olds)	IECAM program counts + ACS population; NIEER 2024 Yearbook
Early Intervention access — Child Find (Indicator 6)	IDHS Part C APR Indicator 6
Services in natural environments — EI (Indicator 2)	IDHS Part C APR Indicator 2
Access to slots by race — majority Black/Latino vs White areas	IECAM Data Hub + Census race data by county
Access to slots by poverty — high vs low poverty areas	IECAM Data Hub + Census poverty data by county
Public preschool participation gaps — largest subgroup gap	IECAM participation + ACS data
Geographic access equity — rural vs urban capacity	IECAM capacity data + Census urban/rural designation
Home visiting slots vs population	IDHS HV program reports + ACS population
Home visiting access — geographic and racial equity	IDHS HV program geographic data + Census
EI timeliness — average days from referral to IFSP	IDHS EI program data / CFC performance reports
EI transition planning completeness — Indicator 8C	IDHS Part C APR Indicator 8C
Head Start / Early Head Start — funded slots vs income-eligible children	IECAM Head Start data (ACF PIR) + ACS Table B17024
Well-child visit completion — EPSDT (Medicaid children 0-5)	IL HFS EPSDT CMS-416 annual report
Developmental screening rate	NSCH 2023-24 (HRSA/MCH Bureau) via America's Health Rankings
Preterm birth rate	March of Dimes PeriStats / NCHS natality data (annual)
Preterm birth — Black vs White racial disparity ratio	March of Dimes PeriStats / NCHS natality data
Kindergarten readiness (overall)	ISBE KIDS Data (isbe.net/Pages/KIDS-Data.aspx)
EI child outcomes — SS1 (avg 3 outcomes)	IDHS Part C APR Indicator 3
ECSE child outcomes — within age expectations at exit	ISBE Early Childhood Outcomes Indicator B7
KIDS readiness gap — largest racial/income gap	ISBE KIDS Data (disaggregated)
EI/ECSE service disparities — participation rate ratio	IDHS APR race data + ACS population by race
Early outcome equity across domains	ISBE KIDS + IDHS EI data by race/ethnicity
Caregiver knowledge of rights and services	IDHS Family/Caregiver Survey
Family-centered EI service experience	IDHS Part C Family Survey (Annual Performance Report Indicator 4)
Total public ECE investment per child (0–5)	Civic Fed landscape report + IDEC Programs & Funding Streams Guide
CCAP payment adequacy vs 75th percentile market rate	IDHS Market Rate Survey 2023 + IDHS CCAP rate schedule (eff. 7/1/2025)
PFA state spending per child vs adequacy	NIEER 2024 State of Preschool Yearbook
FFN payment rate adequacy — CCAP reimbursement vs market	IDHS CCAP rate schedule (eff. 7/1/2025) + IDHS Market Rate Survey
Data transparency and integration	IECAM Dashboard + ISBE Report Card + IDHS EI reports + INCCRRA data portal
Use of common metrics across agencies	ExceleRate validation + ISBE EC Outcomes + IDHS Child Outcomes guidance
Geographic and racial coverage of data systems	IECAM Data Hub + CECIDS + ELC equity priorities
Equity integration in planning and targets	PDG B-5 + IDEC strategic plan + ELC racial equity priorities
ExceleRate quality distribution — % Silver or Gold	INCCRRA ExceleRate reports (inccrra.org/data-reports)
ExceleRate participation — % licensed providers enrolled	INCCRRA ExceleRate participation data
Inclusion in preschool — LRE (Indicator B6)	ISBE Early Childhood Indicator B6 LRE tables
Head Start quality — % programs with no federal deficiencies	ACF Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) + IL Head Start Association PIR dashboard
IECMH consultation reach — credentialed consultants per 1,000 enrolled children	Gateways Registry (INCCRRA) + IECAM enrollment data
Preschool suspension and expulsion rate	U.S. Dept of Education Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) 2021-22
Number of licensed providers — 5-year trend	INCCRRA State of Child Care reports
Child care workforce wages — % of state median	CSCCE Early Childhood Workforce Index 2024 + IDES OEWS 2024
Workforce credentials — ExceleRate participation	INCCRRA ExceleRate participation reports
Provider distribution — high-need vs overall loss rate	Civic Fed report + IECAM/INCCRRA provider counts by geography
Home visiting workforce wages	IDHS HV workforce data + IDES OEWS
Child care workforce annual turnover rate	INCCRRA biennial Salary and Staffing Survey of Licensed Child Care Facilities (FY2023)
Workforce credential level — % with AA or higher in ECE/related field	Gateways to Opportunity Registry (INCCRRA) aggregate data + CSCCE 2024 Workforce Index
Workforce racial/ethnic diversity — % who are people of color	CSCCE Early Childhood Workforce Index 2024 + Gateways Registry demographics

Appendix E: Indicators Planned for Future Phases

Future Indicators			
Domain	**Type**	**Indicator Name**	**Metric**
Access & Participation	Level	Home visiting utilization rate	% of eligible families (Medicaid, high-risk) enrolled in home visiting
Access & Participation	Level	EI intake responsiveness — family customer service	% of EI referrals with initial contact within 2 business days (or composite customer service score)
Access & Participation	Level	EI workforce adequacy — provider-to-IFSP ratio by discipline	Ratio of licensed providers per discipline (PT, OT, SLP, DI) per 100 children with IFSPs prescribing that service
Access & Participation	Level	EI service wait time — days from IFSP to first service by discipline	Average days from IFSP completion to first service session for each therapy type prescribed
Access & Participation	Level	CCAP subsidy reach — FFN providers	Number of CCAP-subsidized children in license-exempt (FFN) settings (absolute count, trended annually)
Access & Participation	Level	CCR&R coaching/training access for FFN caregivers	Number of unique FFN caregivers served by CCR&R annually (coaching visit, training session, or resource referral — to be defined consistently with INCCRRA)
Access & Participation	Equity	FFN care prevalence — share of infants/toddlers 0–2 in FFN arrangements	% of children 0–5 in non-parental care who are in FFN (relative, neighbor, or friend) settings vs center-based or licensed home care (CCAP-enrolled only)
Access & Participation	Equity	FFN CCAP access equity — subsidy uptake by race and geography	CCAP subsidy take-up rate by race/ethnicity and rurality: among CCAP-eligible families using FFN care, % who receive subsidy — by Black, Latino, white, and rural/urban
Access & Participation	Equity	Language access for FFN caregivers — materials and support in non-English languages	% of CCR&R FFN training and support materials available in the top 5 non-English languages spoken in IL
Child, Caregiver, & Family Outcomes	Level	Caregiver knowledge of child development	% of surveyed caregivers who can identify age-appropriate developmental milestones
Child, Caregiver, & Family Outcomes	Level	FFN caregiver awareness of IDEC/state support programs	% of FFN caregivers aware of available state subsidy, training, and support programs (e.g., CCAP, Child Care Resource & Referral)
Child, Caregiver, & Family Outcomes	Level	EI IFSP rate vs expected prevalence	IFSP count as % of estimated eligible birth-3 population
Child, Caregiver, & Family Outcomes	Level	EI evaluation completion rate — % of referrals evaluated within 45 days	% of EI referrals where evaluation completed within 45 calendar days (IDEA standard)
Financing & System Performance	Level	Balance: direct services vs administration	% of total ECE dollars spent on direct services vs administration
Financing & System Performance	Equity	Per-child spending — high-need vs low-need counties	Ratio of per-child public ECE funding in high-poverty vs low-poverty counties
Financing & System Performance	Equity	Contracting equity — grants to high-need communities	Share of grants/contracts to orgs in communities of color/high-poverty vs share of need
Financing & System Performance	Level	Home visiting spending per child	State HV spending per enrolled family as % of adequacy benchmark
Governance & System Functioning	Level	HV data integration — unified IDEC data platform covering all HV models/funders	Qualitative 0-3: 0=no platform; 1=planning underway; 2=pilot operational; 3=full platform
Quality & Inclusion	Equity	Access to high-quality slots in high-need communities	Ratio of Silver/Gold slots per 100 children in high-poverty vs low-poverty areas
Quality & Inclusion	Equity	Inclusion disparities — B6 by race and income	Largest gap in B6 inclusion rates by race/ethnicity and income
Quality & Inclusion	Level	FFN caregiver participation in ExceleRate or equivalent quality pathway	% of CCAP-enrolled FFN providers participating in any quality improvement pathway (ExceleRate or CCR&R mentoring program)
Quality & Inclusion	Level	Inclusion consultation reach — consultants per 1,000 IEP children in EC settings	# of credentialed inclusion consultants / 1,000 children with IEPs in EC settings
Quality & Inclusion	Level	Health consultation reach — consultants per 1,000 licensed-program children	# of credentialed child care health consultants / 1,000 licensed-program children
Workforce & Provider Stability	Equity	Wage and benefit gaps by race/ethnicity	Ratio of median wage for ECE workers of color vs White workers