



Summit Outcomes
March, 2017



Summit Outcomes
March, 2017

SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Can our research and cross-agency discussions lead us to a shared vision for inclusion in Illinois?

VISION

“We need to be relentless in our pursuit of a solution.”

-Kate Anderson Foley

Illinois commits to the inclusion of each and every child with special needs with typically developing peers in all early childhood environments.

DEFINING INCLUSION

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.

-Adapted from Joint Position Statement on Inclusion from the DEC and NAEYC

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Increase Equitable Opportunity: Inclusion of children with special needs will be a priority in decision making about program design and resource allocation in order to ensure equitable access and full participation in all early childhood environments.

Partner with Families: We ensure the meaningful and supported engagement of families in policy/guidance decisions, planning, and evaluation of programs, as well as in IFSP, IEP, transition and other family/professional meetings.

Share Benefits of Inclusion: We recognize and intentionally raise public awareness of the well-researched benefits (for all children) of high-quality inclusion of children with special needs in all early childhood settings.

Build and Support a Competent Workforce: All professionals who work with children should have the knowledge, competencies and supports to implement evidence-based practices. We will deliberately shift policy to ensure the appropriate professional standards, embedded professional development, and dedicated system of supports that promote culturally and linguistically responsive practice, positive attitudes and beliefs about inclusion, and knowledge of disability that are so critical to this effort.

Unified Purpose: We will intentionally and strategically engage in formal collaboration across agencies to make significant progress toward high quality inclusion across early childhood settings.

Set Goals and Track Data: Across agencies we will set concrete goals for expanding access to inclusive and high quality early learning opportunities, including a base line number of children with and without disabilities in all early childhood settings, and benchmarks that track progress toward the goal.

INCLUSION SUMMIT

What do cross-field strategy discussions tell us about the inventory of tactics that might guide our way forward?

A WAY FORWARD: DRIVING QUESTIONS

Three driving questions arose from the federal policy statement and formed the basis for summit discussion:

How do we shift policies and resources at a systems or community level to ensure that early childhood teachers, providers, and leaders have the knowledge and skills required to serve children with diverse needs in all early childhood settings?

How can we assure inclusion of children with special needs is a priority in program design and resource decision-making so that all children have access to high quality opportunities across early childhood settings?

How do we work across agencies to leverage existing structures and systems to establish a coordinated, efficient, and sustainable infrastructure for inclusion in early childhood?

SUMMIT DISCUSSION YIELDED TEN HIGH OPPORTUNITY AREAS SUPPORTED BY AN INVENTORY OF POTENTIAL TACTICS

Workforce	Access	Collaboration
1. Move toward shared competencies in our ECE workforce (teachers & leaders) that promote high quality, inclusive programs	4. Address funding restrictions and challenges to support implementation of inclusion	8. Cultivate a shared Illinois vision/ approach to inclusion
2. Improve our pre-service preparation for ECE providers	5. Address beliefs, attitudes and skills to increase access	9. Better understand who we are serving and how we are doing as system
3. Surface and address priority needs for professional development (on-going & embedded) within ECE settings to increase high quality inclusion	6. Emphasize quality while still holding the field accountable	10. Facilitate and support successful ECE collaboration toward inclusion
	7. Incorporate our common definitions of inclusion and natural environments into policy & practice	

WORKFORCE TACTIC INVENTORY

“Children do not need to be ready for inclusive settings...we need to be ready for them.”

-Erin Barton

Issue	Articulated Potential Solution(s)
1 - How can we move toward shared competencies in our ECE workforce (teachers & leaders) that promote high quality, inclusive programs?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Inventory of PD and training systems is required to map current required competencies2. Move toward shared competencies across settings, shared definitions/titles. Start with state board of education/home visiting standards and build set of core competencies and specialized standards.3. Create competencies around socio-emotional needs and mental health.4. Change certification policy/ requirements to match core standards, specialty standards, including appropriate certification for ELL, EC and ECSE. Merge requirements into one system instead of two.5. Work with higher education to make it more efficient to get the ECSE and ELL within the EC licensure. Create incentives for schools to get more students dual licensed. Bringing community colleges together with all higher education to make a position statement regarding the importance of dual certification. OR, establish state requirement for universities to offer blended pre-service program, rather than "dual certification".6. Enhance 6 hr special needs training for DCFS licensing in childcare by bringing in high quality PD opportunities.7. Create horizontal alignment across early childhood funders with respect to training, certification requirements in ECE/inclusion8. Establish endorsements for inclusion in all levels of service

WORKFORCE TACTIC INVENTORY

Issue	Articulated Potential Solution(s)
<p>2 - What can we do to specifically improve our pre-service preparation for ECE providers?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on student teaching experiences: identify high quality & culturally diverse placements with inclusion, prepare coach teachers, follow-up PD in first five years. Ensure a variety of experiences and give them hands on embedded practice opportunities. 2. Create space within ISBE rules that allow students to visit other settings as ISBE rules might require licensed teacher 3. Think about pre-service prep as prep for an initial practitioner (practitioner will continue learning) and make a stronger link between pre-service training and on-going coaching/mentoring. Pilot program that includes meaningful job apprenticeship. 4. Universities create/share centralized pedagogy to define inclusion as part of high quality. Message of "basic rights and human rights" in pre-service classrooms, embedding inclusion and related topics whenever possible in classes 5. Create an early childhood teacher pipeline in high school so students can enter into professions easier, similar to the CNA pipeline. 6. Ask for better direction from state board of education. Look at pre-service course offerings across systems and build toward alignment to meet core competencies, specialized competencies 7. Bring university deans and other key decision-makers into strategy discussions 8. Better training of CDA staff on inclusion 9. Provide university/college faculty with strong inclusion training 10. Explore use of HERO program (works with Higher Ed instructors) and Personnel prep grants from OSEP to support

WORKFORCE TACTIC INVENTORY

If we keep our eye on the child, then we'll figure out the rest."

-Kate Anderson Foley

Issue	Articulated Potential Solution(s)
<p>3 – What are the best ways to surface and address priority needs for professional development (on-going & embedded) within ECE settings to increase high quality inclusion?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate administrators about needs of teachers, including: ECE, inclusion, need for planning time, braid/blend funding 2. Increase teacher training in family engagement, multiple needs, socio-emotional needs, how to embed services in the classroom 3. Recruit more teachers, coaches, mentors, mental health consultant /build pool for support 4. Model shared PD--what it could look like and how it could be provided across systems. 5. Build off of the cross-trainings between home visiting and DCFS (therapists and teachers). Consider how to use mental health providers as consultants/resource for professional development. 6. Establish support systems/PD to help home visitors, childcare to integrate inclusive supports into practice 7. Require % of PD courses to be interdisciplinary 8. CEU's/CPDU's – can some of it be related to inclusion? But also need to make sure that if you put the requirement in there, you have the infrastructure to support it (do you have enough staff to train everyone to get those credits, etc.). Also, create requirements for leadership level. 9. Think about how to differentiate coaching/PD for multi-tier workforce (new and long-term teachers) 10. Build collaboration on reflective practice 11. Re-competition for pre-school for all- need to incorporate inclusive practices/training into rubric 12. Increase access to information and tools for teachers that is user-friendly. 13. Establish planning/coordination expectation within all ECE settings for all providers, teachers 14. Develop a task force for inclusion.....special grants for in-service, funding, materials, collaborative support.

ACCESS TACTIC INVENTORY

"High quality and inclusive settings go together. If children with disabilities do well, other children will do well too."

-Christy Kavulic

Issue	Articulated Potential Solution(s)
4 – In what ways can we address funding restrictions and challenges to support implementation?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="514 641 1858 673">1. Address how we fund our special education teachers vs how we fund our PFA teachers<li data-bbox="514 673 1858 706">2. Create more secure funding/flexibility within the funding to effectively serve kids or support staff.<li data-bbox="514 706 1858 803">3. Create guidance on how to use funding creatively to address needs of students/classrooms. E.g. Closing self-contained classrooms, frees up teachers to be pushed out into the community settings where the kids are. Use RTT report to lift up strategies/guidance on blending and braiding etc.<li data-bbox="514 803 1858 868">4. Increase community collaboration focused on resource leveraging/sharing for PD, resources for children, families, and staff<li data-bbox="514 868 1858 901">5. Explore use of Title 1 funding for really strong PD services--ESSA will be a good new opportunity<li data-bbox="514 901 1858 933">6. Push for universal screening that is billable through Medicaid, other insurances<li data-bbox="514 933 1858 966">7. Develop strategies to increase parity of funding across programs and communities for inclusive activities.

ACCESS TACTIC INVENTORY

Issue	Articulated Potential Solution(s)
<p>5 - What are our best opportunities to address beliefs, attitudes and skills to increase access?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop more opportunities for teachers to learn about how to work with kids with disabilities or experience inclusive classrooms, such as: use of EI trainings on weekends/nights, provide pay for attendance, cross-site trainings, peer-to-peer coaching 2. Need to work with the union organizations and include in our stakeholder discussions. 3. Develop and make available video trainings for teachers getting children with IEPs in the classroom to support what they need to assist behaviors. 4. Build upon IL state board of education program for early childhood, principals (LINK curriculum) to educate administrators. 5. Some communities/districts are pulling home childcare into the PD process. How can we share these practices across schools? Make part of the MOU with school districts? 6. Address background check requirements for EI providers across multiple settings (can they just get it done once)? 7. Ensure that designated ECE/MH coaches are prepared to do that job. 8. Establish planning time (weekly or more frequently) for specialists to come in and help teachers with lesson planning, rather than in the classroom with individual children. 9. Address building accessibility issues 10. Develop policy/guidance against bumping EC programs to meet wider school district needs 11. Grow bilingual ECE capacity

ACCESS TACTIC INVENTORY

“For far too long we’ve made some parents heroes and marathon runners... but we all know this isn’t work parents should have to do alone.”

- IL First Lady Diana Rauner

Issue	Articulated Potential Solution(s)
6 - How do we emphasize quality while still holding the field accountable for inclusion?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When monitoring, provide programs with resources as part of quality improvement plan vs. check offs (# of IEPs, # recruited with special needs, etc.).2. Create minimum quality standards by program type that incorporate inclusion3. Create more Professional Learning Communities to share lessons learned and hold each other accountable4. Increase use of positive behavior strategies for early childhood program technical assistance5. Provide incentives in funding process: child care bumps reimbursement if you serve more children with disabilities, materials, etc.; AND/OR set targets for inclusion like HS & PEG; AND/OR use 'start up incentives' only- then intrinsic value of serving "6. Need to do a scan of what are requirements in each system and where they match up: teacher and leadership expectations7. Monitor what professionals are doing and collect good data as basis for system improvement8. Include inclusion in ratings/rubrics for quality, funding. High quality means inclusion. Incorporate within funding applications as integral to process.9. Develop strategies, modeling to inform parents of their options and opportunities to advocate.10. Increase parent presence in classroom to support teachers.11. More parent voices on the ELC12. Increase assistance for people with disabilities to self advocate and participate in the IEP process13. Ensure that all programs have parent engagement plans in place14. Outreach to parents on importance of communicating EI participation to schools, systems AND/OR make notification automatic

ACCESS TACTIC INVENTORY

Issue	Articulated Potential Solution(s)
7 – How can we make sure that our common definitions of inclusion and natural environments are incorporated into policy & practice?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="546 649 1887 714">1. Create a statewide definition or understanding that includes: inclusion, natural environments, trauma focus, mental health needs<li data-bbox="546 714 1887 812">2. Companion messaging: not just compliance but important to outcomes for children; high quality inclusion (awards of excellence) to high quality means inclusion; if it is high quality instruction, you are already differentiating instruction/curriculum and have a multi-tiered system of support.<li data-bbox="546 812 1887 909">3. Need to partner with people who are active in social justice work to convey this message. "Consider a type of PR/public awareness campaign across all of our systems about what inclusion is and that everyone has a piece and a part to play. "<li data-bbox="546 909 1887 974">4. Could we use Higher Ed to help with public awareness? Marketing departments or could it be a project assigned within a class?<li data-bbox="546 974 1887 1015">5. Outreach to childcare providers and DCFS case workers--what is their role/responsibility here?<li data-bbox="546 1015 1887 1112">6. Increasing visibility and exposure to high quality inclusive settings. Share model programs across school districts. What are the elements of a successful program and how can you work to support building those elements? Can people visit them to see how they work?<li data-bbox="546 1112 1887 1185">7. Create universality around mental health counseling. Need definition of ECMH so we know what we are all talking about.

COLLABORATION TACTIC INVENTORY

“I got my training to work with children, not with other adults - but it turns out that’s what’s important. Collaboration is critical to successful inclusion efforts.”

-Erin Barton

Issues Identified	Articulated Potential Solution(s)
8 - What is our shared Illinois vision/approach to inclusion?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider whether to work through early learning council or the IAT to finalize a vision and action plan? 2. Improve communication from state-wide bodies like the early learning council so that others know what is happening there.
9 - What can we do to better understand who we are serving and how we are doing as system?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IL Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) and the Interagency Team (IAT) take on topic of data collection. 2. Build upon new ISBE database (under development) to look at outcomes and demographics across schools. 3. Need to develop a cross- agency list of what we are collecting/why and share (data elements). 4. Home visiting to conduct a survey about where home visiting is with inclusion. 5. Increase membership strategically for LRE Stakeholder Consortium. 6. Develop a state system for tracking children between agencies to increase coordination of services.
10 - How will we facilitate and support successful ECE collaboration toward inclusion?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a table/forum for sharing cross-system collaboration and goal-setting, such as LRE Consortium. 2. Conduct a cross-agency analysis and see where rules create unintended barriers (and then we actively fix them). 3. Reach school district and local ECE leadership to share collaborative models and get them to understand the benefits, spread beliefs. 4. Need parent advocates who are able to work on sharing the word. 5. Ask each state agency to develop 2 goals per agency and bring those together to sift through and make some action steps. 6. Use multiple strategies for creating change, including mandates, incentives, etc. 7. Work at state level to assess local capacity. Establish committees to work on priority capacity needs for local areas. Focus on areas that really need support and leave those who are doing well alone.

OVERARCHING IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITIES

“We have a long way to go, so much to do, but so much to build from.”

- IL First Lady Diana Rauner

1. Convene key leaders in various areas/agencies to lead work and be the constant champion for inclusion
2. Develop a shared cross-sector vision statement for inclusion and plan to support implementation
3. Incorporate our common definitions of inclusion and natural environments into policy & practices across statewide infrastructure
4. Deliver research and the case for inclusion in an easily accessible and sharable format beginning with Summit participants
 - Create a glossary of definitions and terms to support shared understanding regarding policy (ex. what natural environment means); distribute
 - Share research used at Summit more broadly for participants to use in their work
5. Engage home visiting workforce in a survey of their understanding of, and role in, inclusion – including what supports they need
6. Examine opportunities to provide cross-sector professional learning, technical assistance and coaching that leverages existing expertise and infrastructure
 - Amend existing workforce trainings to encompass high quality inclusive education content across early childhood systems
 - embed and expand expertise within CCR&R system; online resources and training
 - embed expertise in the ongoing support system
7. Address higher education system to integrate inclusion more deeply in training for all teachers
 - Work with field leaders to identify modifications to teacher preparation that promote inclusion; Align efforts as appropriate with Children’s Cabinet early childhood workforce project.
 - Address curricula in core programs in higher education so all teachers are prepared to teach in inclusive settings
8. Examine opportunities to scale out social emotional supports within each early childhood sector including pyramid model and early childhood mental health consultation supports

NEXT STEPS

Share Summit outcomes with participants

Identify champions throughout different sectors of the field to lead action

Begin to prioritize tactics and adopt roles and responsibilities in partnership with the following key audiences:

- Summit Steering Committee Meeting (late March/early April)

- Inclusion Sub-committee (March 7th)

- Early Learning Council (target summer mtg. for Exec.)

- Interagency Early Childhood Team (Timing TBD)

- Early Childhood Least Restrictive Environment Stakeholders (EC LRE) Consortium (mtg. April 7th)

Ultimately, our hope is for the full ELC to approve a state-wide plan in summer or fall.

APPENDIX A

Summit Exit Survey Results

SUMMIT EXIT SURVEY RESULTS

About half (44/91) of the Summit participants completed surveys, and 39/44 included their names for follow-up.

When asked about the extent to which presentations and discussions achieved desired outcomes from the Summit, respondents were overwhelmingly positive, with in excess of 95% indicating agreement with the statements at the “somewhat” or “to a great extent” levels.

Participants were truly inspired and listed the reasons in this order of commonality: 1) Bridget Brown; 2) Speakers/Data; 3) Diverse representation; 4) Discussions at tables 5) Exploration of the possibilities.

Participants had strong perceptions of the “most important thing learned”, which can be categorized in five areas, in order of frequency: 1) Opportunities for cross-agency collaboration; 2) Need for focus/leadership; 3) Importance of attitudes/belief; 4) Lack of progress; 5) Research base.

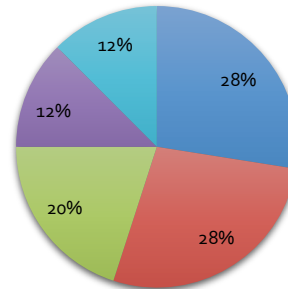
41/44 or 93% of respondents made at least one commitment to act in their role to advance inclusion for young children. Nearly ¾ of commitments were in three areas: 1) actively work to learn/share knowledge; 2) Take back and share with staff/leaders; and 3) Start process of reviewing my organization’s policies with an inclusion lens.

PERCEPTIONS OF SUMMIT EFFECTIVENESS

	Presentations/Videos: To what extent did they...			Strategy Discussions: To what extent did they encourage productive discussions?		
	Help you better understand the research practices and legal foundation for inclusion?	Give you more information about what is happening/needs to happen to increase inclusion in IL?	Increase your awareness and understanding of inclusion, and the possibilities for children in IL?	Session 1 (Workforce)	Session 2 (Access)	Session 3 (Collaboration)
Average Response	4.8	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7
% "Somewhat"	25%	32%	27%	23%	23%	30%
% "To a great extent"	75%	64%	70%	75%	75%	70%

TAKEAWAYS: INSPIRATION

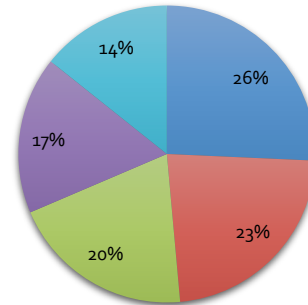
What about the event today inspired you?



- Bridget Brown: inspiring, how it affected her life, re-affirmed purpose
- Speakers/Data: research base, room for growth, diverse perspectives
- Diverse representation: openness to share, collective impact, shared commitment to inclusion, many voices/perspectives, enthusiasm, minds coming together-uplifting
- Discussions at tables: pertinent, inspiring, motivating, collegial, sharing ideas
- Exploration of the possibilities: through collaboration, sharing challenges/solutions, seeing so many care/value inclusion, hearing about successful experiences, shared beliefs/goals, inclusion as social justice issue

TAKEAWAYS: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

What was the most important thing you learned today?



- Opportunities for cross-agency collaboration: peer-to-peer learning, strategies, work across state/local levels, family engagement, increased interest, includes many professions & viewpoints
- Need for focus/leadership: intentionality, state takes lead, Illinois plan, disconnected conversations, common goals, accountability, many stakeholders,
- Importance of attitudes/belief: key issue to address, we need to be ready not kids, education and awareness needed, quality = inclusion, it is not about turf
- Lack of progress: long-term with little gain, segregated training systems for teachers, only 7% improvement, not acceptable
- Research base: evidence of value to all, gives different ways to talk about it, a lot to build upon, current successes, progress in EC

INITIAL COMMITMENTS TO ADVANCE INCLUSION IN ILLINOIS

