

Family Advisory Committee (FAC) Proposal

Executive Summary

Statement of Purpose

The Family Advisory Committee (FAC) will serve as a systematic vehicle for the voices of families in communities and programs to be raised up to the state level. The Committee will also serve as a resource and sounding board for state agencies that are making policy and program decisions. The members of the Family Advisory Committee are expected to provide two-way feedback between the Committee and their local program or collaboration. The following proposal is a recommendation from the Family Engagement Implementation Subcommittee (FEIS), which outlines how the FAC should operate both as a committee and within the Early Learning Council framework in its first year of implementation.

General Membership

The FAC will consist of 16 total representatives. The Subcommittee recommends using the Illinois Department of Public Health's regional map, which divides the state into 7 regions, to ensure communities across Illinois are adequately represented. While this proposal is focused on the FAC's first year of implementation, the FEIS envisions the eventual establishment of regional parent councils, which would elect representatives to serve on the FAC.

Member Selection Process

The proposal identifies several expectations and qualifications for representatives serving on the FAC, including that he or she be a parent or parental voice for a child birth to 12 years of age, have first-hand experience with a publicly funded early learning program, and have connections to early childhood programs and collaborations in their community to allow for two way communication process. Additionally, the proposal specifies how representatives shall be selected, identifies the terms limits that should be imposed, and recommends the inclusion of 2 FAC alumni mentors to assist new members.

FAC Representation on the Early Learning Council (ELC)

At least 20 percent of ELC Membership should consist of FAC family representatives, and two seats on the ELC Executive Committee should be designated for FAC representatives.

Family Engagement Training

FAC representatives should receive an annual orientation to cover topics such as leadership, advocacy, and an overview of the early childhood system in Illinois. Furthermore, members of the Early Learning

Council should receive annual orientations and training on the importance of and how to facilitate meaningful family engagement.

Meeting Schedule and Governance

The FAC will meet in person quarterly. Initially, staff from the backbone agency will facilitate the meetings, but eventually the FAC members should decide their own governing procedures.

Backbone Agency and FAC Support System

A public RFP should be sent out to select a backbone agency to help support and facilitate the FAC. During the FAC's first year, the backbone agency should work closely with the Access Committee and its Family Engagement Implementation Subcommittee to support and mentor the FAC. Additionally, the proposal identified supports to help facilitate effective participation and engagement from family representatives. These supports include child care, a participation stipend, a transportation reimbursement, evening or weekend meeting times, and program and meeting supplies.