

Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC)

Early Childhood System Strategic Planning

Thursday, March 5th, 2026



Meeting Objectives

March 2026

1. Review the 2025 IRMC Charge and accomplishments
2. Align on the opportunity and next steps for Delaware to build a unified early care and education (ECCE) system in 2026



Agenda

Agenda Item	Time Allotted
Attendance and Minutes	10 mins
Welcome: Review of IRMC Charge & 2025 Accomplishments	15 mins
Chair Update: 2025 IRMC Report	25 mins
Chair Update: Delaware's 2026 Priorities	20 mins
Preschool Development Grant B-5 Systems Building	30 mins
Closing & Next Steps	5 mins
Public comment	15 mins



Welcome

Review of IRMC Charge & 2025 Accomplishments



Review: 2025 IRMC Charge

In 2025, the Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC) convened state leadership to align on a vision for Delaware’s birth-to-5 system that enables parents to work and that provides children with safe, trauma-free enrichment environments. This work included:

1. Aligning on a [Public Good Statement](#) which confirmed the IRMC’s vision an early childhood care and education system that provides each and every child with an opportunity to thrive through high-quality early childhood education.
2. Clarifying the public good statement through the [Glossary of Terms](#), anchoring the IRMC in a shared understanding.
3. Building understanding of the current state of Delaware’s early childhood system through presentations from the [DOE](#), [DHSS](#), and [Office of the Controller General](#).



IRMC Public Good Statement

Delaware envisions an early childhood care and education system that is a public good, where every child, from birth through age five, has the opportunity to thrive. Each and every family will experience choice through a universal, publicly-subsidized mixed-delivery system, with clear and transparent pathways for families to access affordable, voluntary, developmentally appropriate and high-quality early childhood education.

Together with families, educators, and communities, Delaware state leaders will work to create conditions and build an ideal system, rooted in collaboration and possibility that secures a thriving future and school readiness for all of Delaware's youngest learners. Delaware state leaders will continue to center the voices of families and early childhood educators and honor the field of early childhood education as a respected and highly skilled profession. **Guided by equity, quality, affordability, and access, the state is committed to bold decision-making with the courage to change what is not working and the vision to grow what is.**

In 2025, the IRMC set a clear vision; now is the moment to build the system to realize it.



IRMC Accomplishments in 2025

2025 Built the Blueprint. 2026 Enables Transformation.

- In 2025, the IRMC developed a comprehensive vision and policy framework for strengthening Delaware's early childhood system.
- The IRMC Report outlines the priorities identified in 2025 to achieve sustainable impact, which will be reviewed later today.
- The funds from the Professional Development Grant (PDG B-5) are the driving force that will allow Delaware to pursue the IRMC vision through aligned, cross-agency system-building in 2026.



Chair Update



2025 IRMC Report



Overview: 2025 IRMC Report

The IRMC Report outlines a clear roadmap to strengthen Delaware's early childhood system and take advantage of the time-sensitive opportunity for durable, system-level change.

At a high level, the report discusses:

- **A Clear State Vision:** Delaware has committed to early childhood care and education as a public good, prioritizing access, affordability, and quality for all children and families.
- **Strong Leadership & Alignment:** Under Governor Meyer and Lt. Governor Gay, the revitalized IRMC is positioned to align strategy and drive system transformation.
- **How System Gaps Remain:** Fragmented governance, siloed funding, uneven quality standards, and limited integrated data constrain impact and scalability.
- **Strategic Opportunity in 2026:** \$11.3M in PDG B-5 funds provide a one-time opportunity to strengthen system infrastructure, not just expand programs.
- **Four Foundational Priorities:** Governance, funding alignment, quality, and data form the roadmap for building a coherent, sustainable early childhood system.



IRMC Roadmap

The IRMC report outlines a clear agenda for building an investable, unified early childhood system, based on four foundational conditions.

- 1. Governance:** Clarify roles, strengthen accountability, and ensure families and providers experience one coordinated system.
- 2. Funding Alignment:** Align federal, state, and local dollars into a transparent, predictable model that advances access and stability.
- 3. Quality:** Establish a north star for quality, and align supports and measurement across settings.
- 4. Data:** Build a cross-agency data foundation to track who is served, identify gaps, and guide investment decisions.



2025 IRMC Report

You will receive a copy of this report later today, along with a feedback form.

We aim to publish this report in March.



Align on Delaware's 2026 Priorities



2026: Critical Window to Act

Alignment across leadership, stakeholders, and resources makes 2026 the time to shift from planning to execution.

- **Leadership and Stakeholder Alignment:** State leadership, the IRMC, the advocacy community, providers, and partners share a clear understanding that incremental change is no longer sufficient and are unified in advancing early childhood system reform in 2026.
- **Funding Convergence:** One-time PDG B-5 resources and the FY27 budget cycle create a rare opportunity to pair planning with implementation.
- **Strategic Clarity:** The roadmap priorities are defined – governance, funding alignment, quality, and data – providing a shared direction for action.

While the conditions for progress are in place, durable change will require bringing additional voices and perspectives into the design and implementation process.



IRMC Advisory Subcommittees

As Delaware builds ECCE as a public good, structured advisory committees will align policy, funding, employers, and providers around a unified agenda.

To ensure clarity and alignment across 2026 priorities and stakeholder groups, the following advisory subcommittees will convene to deliver on Delaware's vision:

- **Delaware Early Childhood Council (DECC)**: Ongoing cross-sector coordination and provider engagement
- **Legislative Advisory Subcommittee**: Align on policy priorities and systems-building opportunities for 2026
- **Employer Advisory Subcommittee**: Engaging the business community in sustainable, scalable ECCE solutions



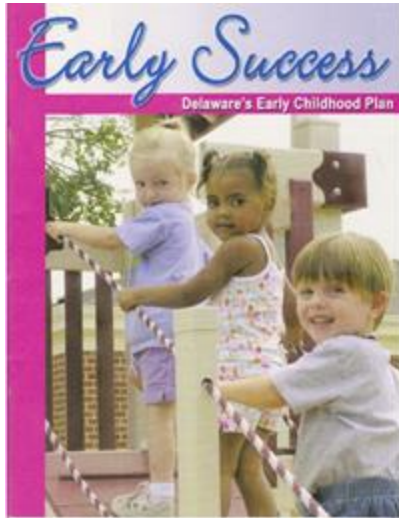
Early Childhood Council Strategic Plan Timeline

2008 – 2013

2013 – 2018

2019

2020 – 2025



Delaware receives federal Professional Development Grant – Birth to Five grant for needs assessment and planning



Alignment Across Delaware

Working Collectively to Advance ECE as a Public Good

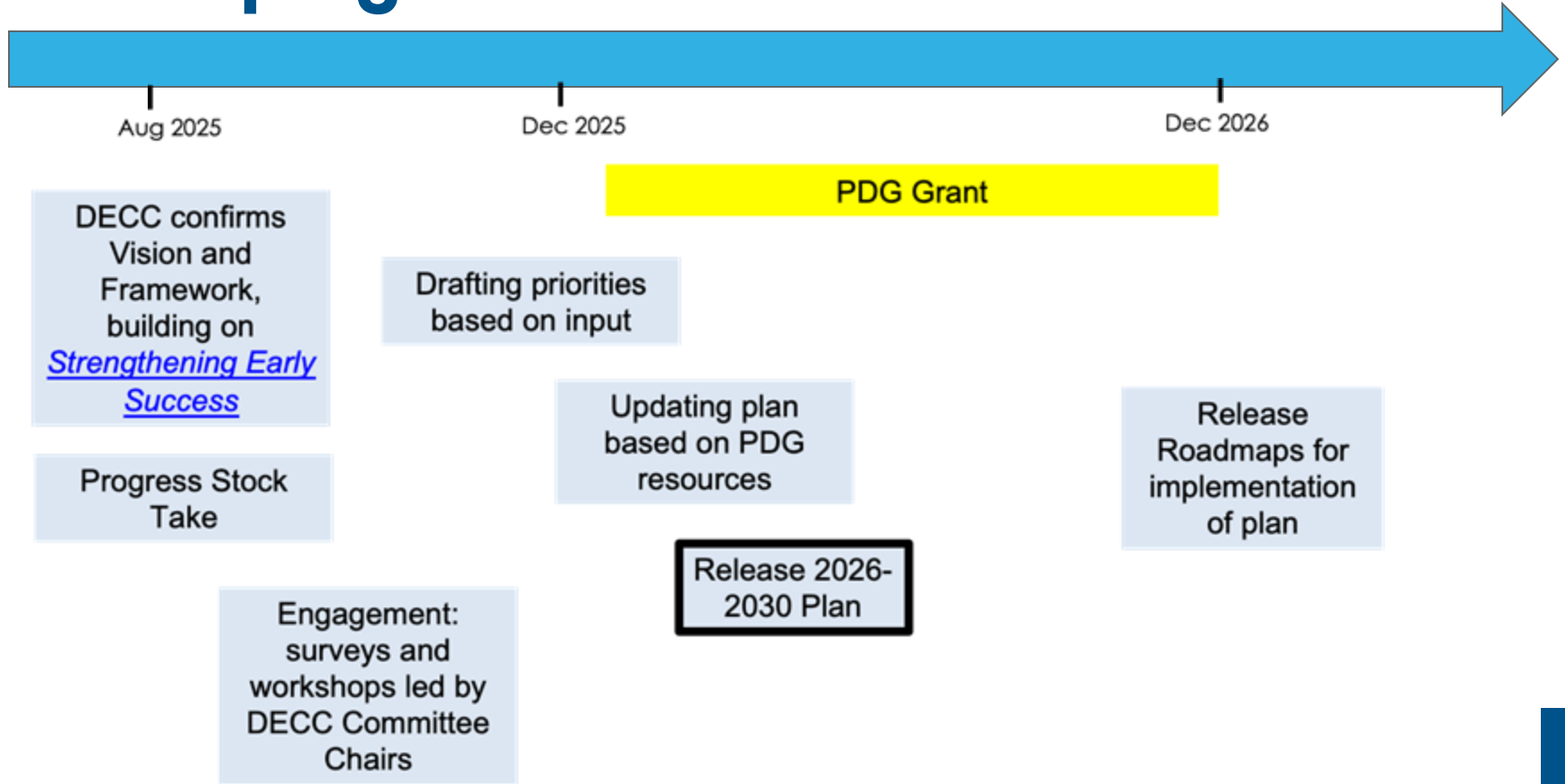


- Charting path to ECE as public good as governing and implementing agencies
- Members include Cabinet Secretaries-- covering education, health, and child welfare-- and DECC



- Advisory Body representing programs, families, community-based organizations, child care providers, state agencies
- Addresses health, education, care, and family supports

Developing the 2026–2030 DECC Plan



Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)

Systems-Building Grant



PDG B-5: Funding Delaware's Systems-Building Agenda





Delaware received \$11.3 million in federal funds to do implement the governance, policies, and funding into a coherent mixed-delivery system.

- PDG B-5 is a systems-building grant designed to create a “unified, coherent statewide ECCE system.”
- It supports “unifying governance, policies, and funding into one coordinated system” rather than isolated initiatives.
- By winning this grant, Delaware can now resource its strategy to begin executing the state’s big goals for kids and families



Delivering on Delaware's ECCE Vision

PDG will allow Delaware to make progress on each of the IRMC priorities identified in the IRMC Report, moving the state from fragmented programs to an investable ECCE system.

PDG and IRMC Aligned Goals	Current Reality	PDG Positions Delaware To
Governance 	Complex family navigation and administrative strain on providers	Coordinate a statewide access network and regional shared-service infrastructure
Funding Alignment 	Funding fragment across agencies and programs	Design a unified financing model that supports sustainability and accountability.
Quality 	Inconsistent expectations and supports across settings.	Align quality standards and improvement supports across the mixed-delivery system
Data 	Fragmented data systems and incomplete picture of children served, quality, or cost.	Build integrated dashboards and shared data infrastructure for decision-making.



Delaware's Approach

While the PDG grant is structured as multiple workstreams, Delaware is approaching this work as one coordinated systems-building strategy.

The IRMC charges agencies to align around a shared direction, ensuring that governance, funding, and data reforms reinforce one another and deliver a unified mixed-delivery system experience for children and families.

- **One Delaware strategy** where all workstreams advance ECCE as a public good:
 - **Needs Assessment**, with analytical dashboards to visualize data
 - **Systems-level:** Unifying Governance and Finance
 - **Family-level:** Families' Early Resource & Referral Network
 - **Professional-level:** Individual licensure alignment across early childhood field
 - **Program-level:** Child Care Hub Architecture

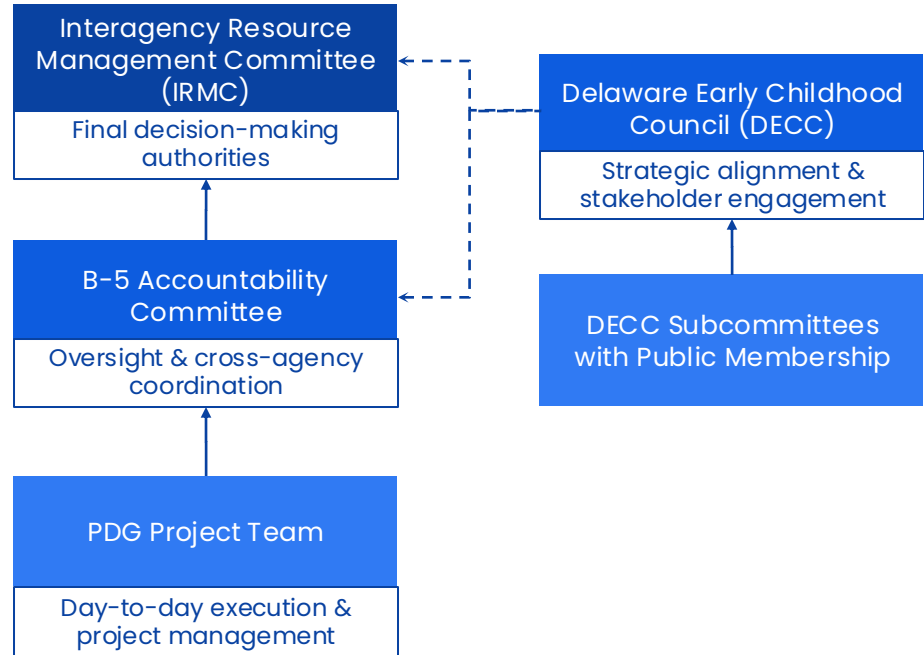
- **Outcome: One shared path**

Families and early childhood professionals experience a seamless system, not disconnected entry points.

The Role of the IRMC: Coordinating Execution Across One Delaware Strategy

IRMC ensures PDG functions as one coordinated systems-building strategy rather than disconnected initiatives.

- IRMC aligns agency actions to one shared statewide strategy.
- Activities are sequenced and integrated to avoid duplication and fragmentation.
- Every agency advances the same systems-building agenda for a unified experience, not siloed progress.



Systems are Built by Experience Designers

“Every member of our team must recognize that the child- and family-serving systems that are not generally considered to be under the early childhood system (housing, economic development, and transportation) are connected to child and family well-being. Each of these systems, and how they interact with one another, impacts a child’s outcome.

It is up to **early childhood systems builders** to identify the barriers to positive outcomes that result from an issue with **any of the elements within the overall system**. This is one of the early childhood systems builders’ greatest challenges, as these barriers are deeply interwoven with our country’s history and ongoing practice of discrimination and disinvestment.”

Our 2026 Design Challenge

How do we connect and scale what is working for families and children?

Differentiated

Place-based strategies to meet local needs that can adapt to fit changing conditions



Standardized

Replicable, scaled solutions for streamlined monitoring and support; to create efficient and consistent experiences

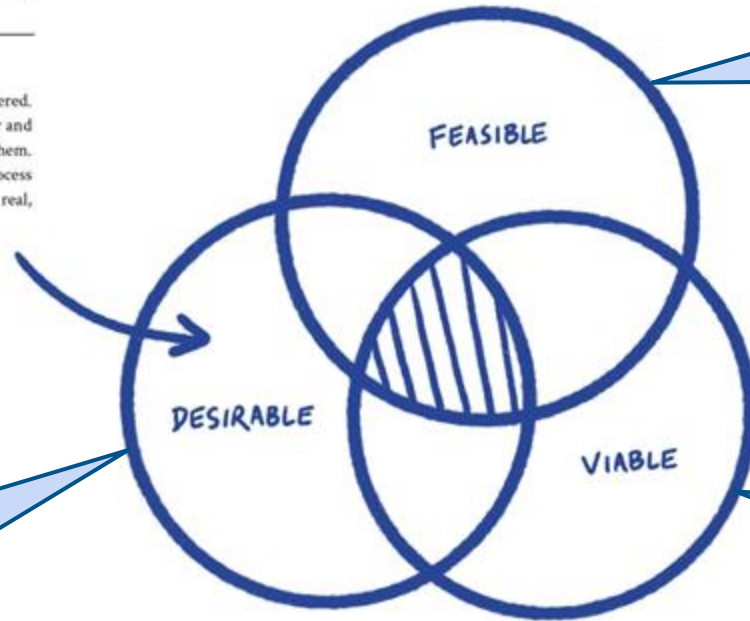
How can we balance standardization with differentiation in the design of our early childhood solutions?

Our 2026 Design Challenge

How do we connect and scale what is working for families and children?

USER EXPERIENCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The design thinking process is human-centered. It starts with the people you're designing for and ends with new solutions that are tailored to them. Including Delawareans in the design process helps ensure that innovative ideas address real, human needs.

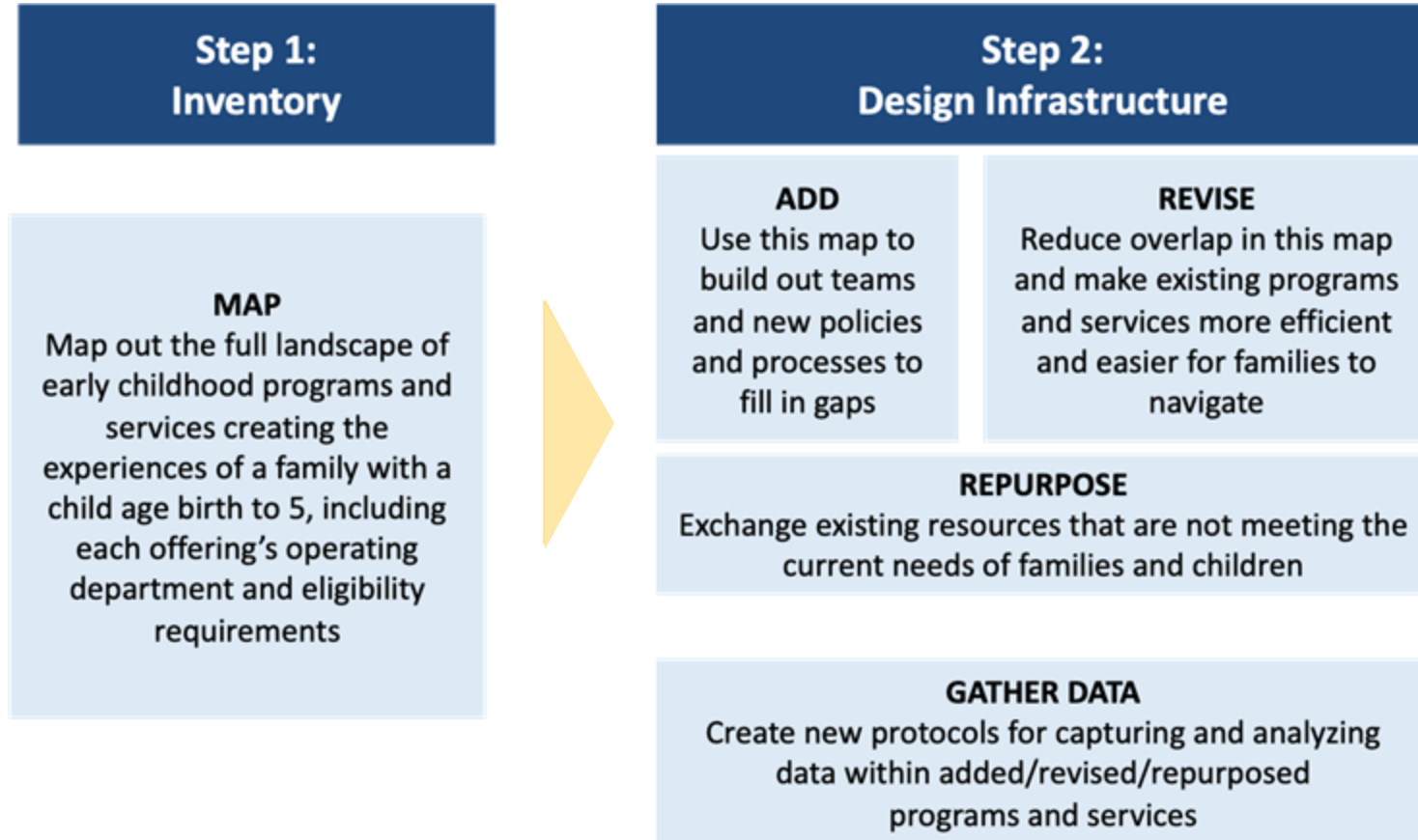


Desirability: How much people want the experience and whether it meets their needs.

Feasibility: Whether it is technically possible to create the experience.

Viability: Whether the experience is financially sustainable.

How do we design experiences that meet the ever-changing needs of families and children in EC?



How do we design experiences that meet the ever-changing needs of families and children in EC?

Step 3: Learn from Using the Infrastructure

USE THE DATA

Create networks that analyze data together and make decisions on resources and policies

TRAIN

Train people at all levels of the system on the new, revised, and repurposed programs and services

Collect their experiential insights as data



Ongoing Cycle of Improvement Design Using Data, Continuously

Map
Collect
Data

Analyze
the data

Add/
Revise/
Repurpose
Design

Train

Next Steps



IRMC Meeting Schedule

Month	Time
(Rescheduled) March 5th, 2026	9:30–11:30 am
April 20, 2026	2 - 4 pm
June 22, 2026	2 - 4 pm
August 25, 2026	2 - 4 pm
October 19, 2026	2 - 4 pm
December 14, 2026	2 - 4 pm



Public Comment

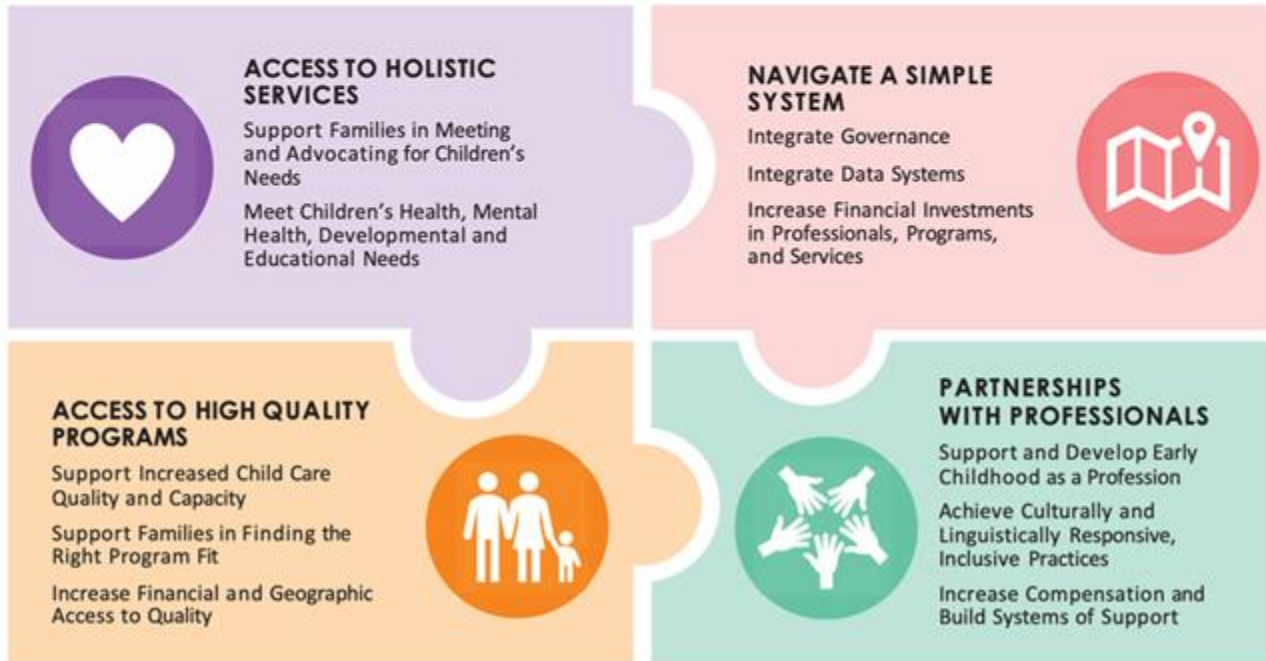


Appendix

DECC Framework

For Recommendations to Achieve Our Vision for 2030 and Beyond

Early childhood care and education is a public good that every child deserves. **Whole child learning starts at birth.**



DECC Plan Implementation: Direct PDG B-5 Support

Shaded boxes indicate PDG projects that advance Strategic Plan priorities.

	1:Statewide Needs Assessment	1: DECC Strategic Plan Implementation Roadmap	2A: Unified ECE governance and funding system mode	2B: Early Childhood Resource and Referral network for families – Maintain and scale Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC)	2B: Family Early Resource and Referral Network – Design blueprint for an early childhood resource and referral network for families	2B. Family Early Resource and Referral Network - Centralized online presence for families	2C: Shared services through Child Care (CC) Hub architecture – Maintain and scale Family Child Care (FCC) Networks	2C: Shared services through Child Care (CC) Hub architecture – Design blueprint for CC hub architecture	2C: Shared services through Child Care (CC) Hub architecture – Technology solutions for CC programs	3: Analytical Dashboards on collected data
Access to Holistic Services										
Access to High Quality Programs										
Partnerships with Professionals										
Navigate a Simple System										