



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC)

What is PDAC?

The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) is made up of highly qualified practitioners, educators, and advocates around the state whose strategy is to improve the quality and stability of the early care and education, school-age, youth development, and family support workforce through increased professional development and improved opportunities for career advancement.

When was PDAC formed?

PDAC was created in December 2002 by the Bureau of Child Care and Development in the Illinois Department of Human Services. The professional development system, through the Gateways to Opportunity website, was introduced statewide in March 2005. The current PDAC mission is “to develop, support, and promote a professional development system for all early care and education, school-age, youth development, and family support practitioners.

What is the role of PDAC?

The role of PDAC through its membership is to act as a collective advisory body made up of stakeholders who work with and for children, youth and families that collaborate to develop recommendations in keeping with PDAC’s vision, mission and values pertaining to professional development.

Has the scope of PDAC always included school-age and youth development practitioners and family support practitioners?

In 2006, PDAC expanded beyond professional development for early care and education practitioners to include those who serve children from birth to 21. The PDAC mission was expanded to include school-age and youth development practitioners and family support practitioners in June 2009.

How is PDAC structured?

PDAC membership represents the diversity of Early Childhood and School and Youth Development, and Family Practitioners in Illinois. Committees develop and implement a strategic plan designed around goals for each committee. Each goal area has the support of a committee structure and a set of strategic objectives that identify and outline work to be accomplished. Following is a list of the five PDAC Committees, current strategic goals, and current chairs.

Financial Supports Committee

Chairs: Laurie Rhodes, Marcy Mendenhall and Gail Nelson

Goal 1: Identify and advance potential new financial supports.

Goal 2: Identify and support ways to advance compensation for the field.

Qualifications and Credentials Committee

Chairs: Bela Mote and Elva DeLuna

Goal 1: Utilize PDAC approved definitions for Relationship – Based Professional Development (RBPD) and Job – Embedded Professional Development (JEPD) by placing within Gateways Credentials frameworks to expand opportunities for workforce development.

Goal 2: Inform and refine existing efforts to expand use of competency infrastructure for Gateways Credentials (in partnership with Higher Education Committee).

Goal 3: Utilize and maximize Illinois' well-developed existing competency infrastructure for Gateways Credentials by making it accessible and transparent to the field.

Goal 4: Monitor and document progress of recommendations made to the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (IDCFS) to streamline pathways through utilization of Gateways Credentials in licensing to increase access and transparency for the workforce.

Workforce Development and Pathways Committee

Chairs: Lori Morrison Frichtl, Christi Chadwick and Lynn Burgett

Goal 1: Improve access to education, credentials, endorsements, and degrees for current and potential (prenatal to age 5) workforce members.

Goal 2: Develop targeted communication and messaging tools.

Goal 3: Develop systems for identifying and sharing high quality, innovative practices that strengthen recruitment and retention for the prenatal to age 5 workforce.

Goal 4: Recommend a system to strengthen reciprocity among qualifications and credentials required by multiple state and regulatory systems. (Inform and partner with Qualifications and Credentials Committee where needed)

Higher Education Committee

Chairs: Kate Connor and Rebecca Pruitt

Goal 1: Developing systems for identifying, sharing, and promoting flexible and innovative higher education early childhood/child development program models.

Goal 2: Expand (scale up) identified successful innovative professional development higher education Early childhood/child development program models.

Goal 3: Gather and disseminate information on approaches to support new and/or incumbent early childhood professionals in entering or sustaining the field and/or workforce.

Goal 4: Utilize and maximize Illinois' well-developed existing competency infrastructure for Gateways to Opportunity Credentials by increasing transparency.

PDAC Steering Committee

Tri-Chairs: Shauna Ejeh, Johnna Darragh Ernst and Carisa Hurley Davis

Goal 1: Ensure PDAC Steering and all PDAC members have awareness of depth, breadth, history, and importance of PDAC's work.

Goal 2: Ensure PDAC continues to be a strong and productive advisory group to the Illinois Department of Human Services through ember leadership development.

Goal 3: Ensure all relevant state agencies and other needed constituencies are represented on PDAC including those participating in standing up the Department of Early Childhood.

Goal 4: Increase information technology representation on PDAC.

Goal 5: Gain better understanding of how early care and education workforce has changed post COVID (e.g. generationally, culturally etc.) in order to strengthen professional development supports.

When does PDAC meet?

PDAC can hold up to four statewide virtual meetings a year. The PDAC standing committees listed above schedule additional meetings as required by their committee's goals and objectives.

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