



## PRESS STYLE GUIDE

### MISSION

To create a statewide regional infrastructure that will amplify input from communities in the development of policies and funding priorities. We support the mobilization of communities to build and sustain equitable access to inclusive, high-quality early childhood services for all children and families in the state of Illinois.

### VISION

Reimagining a more equitable Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system that respects family and community voice and works to ensure it is centered and prioritized at every level of decision-making in Illinois.

### VALUES/GOALS

- Family Voice: Through this transformation centered on authentic family and community engagement, we will address the inequitable distribution of resources and services and rebuild our State's Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system.
- Racial Equity: In an effort to move our Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system to one where racism no longer impacts a child's success, we will work to dismantle barriers that have limited access to high-quality services for minoritized children in every corner of our State.
- Collective Impact: Birth to Five Illinois will build a system that harnesses knowledge directly from families and providers and encourages decision-makers to ensure new and/or expanded services are created to meet community needs. This community-driven framework will directly influence policy/funding at the local, regional, and state level.

### WHO WE ARE

Birth to Five Illinois is a department of the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) funded by the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Human Services. Our charge is to build an infrastructure across the state of Illinois to simplify the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system; we are not a direct service provider. We always spell our name with Illinois (not IL) and Five (not 5).

Our 39 Regional Teams are each comprised of a Regional Council Manager (RCM), Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Specialist, and Regional Administrative Support. We capitalize each word in their titles. Each Region also has an Action Council and Family Council. We also always capitalize both of those words, or Council(s) when it stands alone.

### STRENGTHS-BASED LANGUAGE

We are intentional in the language we use, especially when describing children and families. We avoid language like "at-risk children" and "vulnerable families" as it places blame on individuals rather than the system. Instead, we stay "children at risk of not receiving services due to systemic barriers." We also use person-first language, which emphasizes the person before the condition being described (e.g., avoid "homeless person" and use "person experiencing homelessness").