



CHILDREN'S TRUST

OF ALACHUA COUNTY

Early Childhood Learning Collaborative

Workgroup Updates- May 2026

May 12, 2026



What IS ECLC?

Early Childhood Learning Collaborative (ECLC)

Who Are We?

The Early Childhood Learning Collaborative is a diverse group of people and organizations working together to help young children and families in Alachua County.

What We Do?

Work together to address problems, share ideas, and create solutions that help children grow, learn, and succeed from birth through early childhood.

How We Work?

We use a collaborative and inclusive approach that values relationships and community/family voice.

What We Achieve?

Through collective efforts we create solutions that help children, support families, and improves connections across services and systems.

Long Term Impact

A community where every child has what they need to thrive and every family feels supported.



Today's Agenda



Welcome

Place your name and organization in the chat.



Workgroups

(10 mins each)

Highlights and Updates

Recommendation

Upcoming Action



Breakout Session

(30-45 mins)



Share and Reflection

(15 mins)



As You Listen and Engage Consider.....

Thriving
Parents

Early
Educators

Systems and
Resources

- How does this connect to our work (alignment)?
- Where do we see overlap with other groups (duplication)?
- What do we need from other groups to move forward (integration)?
- Are the priorities and actions clear? If not, what suggestions can help strengthen clarity?

Thriving Parents Workgroup

- Yolanda Hagley, Lisa Heath, and Stacey Williams





Priority and Hope to Accomplish

Priority

To equip and empower parents and caregivers to lead, collaborate, and implement community-driven solutions that improve outcomes for children and families.

What Are We Trying to Accomplish

Everything based on parents' feedback.

Enhance how parents see and receive resources.

Develop infrastructure for Alachua County Family Network (Name of Project)

Through the Network develop pathways for parent leadership, parent led solutions, and networking.
(Training & Support Hub, Events)

Recommend funding structures for parent led solutions to move ideas into action.



Highlights and Updates

Completed

- ✓ Researched what other communities have done including evidence-based resources.
- ✓ Considered an approach that is by parents for parents that enhances parent leadership and resource collaboration.
- ✓ Reviewed a proposal.
- ✓ Launch caregiver survey to determine need and interest.
- ✓ Reviewed survey results & determined next steps

Next Steps

- Invite caregivers into group.
- Meet with Better Together and learn more about their approach to family engagement.
- Draft Plan for Early Childhood Retreat Event.
- Consider a small pilot to develop and test proposed activities.
- Finalize all plans including the network and recommendations.



Family Voice Survey Highlights

The Family Voice Survey gathered feedback from caregivers across Alachua County to better understand family needs, challenges, and opportunities for stronger community connection and leadership. The survey reinforced the importance of building systems that are welcoming, relationship-based, and designed alongside families — not just for families.

45 Responders

41 in caregiver roles

67 responses to children ages between 0-5.

9 Responders would like to connect with the workgroup.

Survey Highlights- Families Want More Connection



This feedback highlights the need for more spaces where families can build relationships, share experiences, and access support in welcoming community environments.

Some caregivers shared that they do not or not always feel connected to other parents or community supports.

- 42% of caregivers said they feel connected to other parents/caregivers in their community
- 36% said they only *sometimes* feel connected
- 22% said they do **not** feel connected

Families shared that the following would help them feel more connected:

- 58% – Family fun events
- 47% – Community or church events
- 42% – Parent support groups
- 42% – Workshops and classes

Survey Highlights- Families Need Easier Access to Resources



The responses suggest families need more coordinated, accessible, and family-friendly ways to connect to resources and support.

While some families reported being able to find help, some families shared barriers that make support difficult to access.

When asked how easy it is to find help or services:

- 36% said it was *very easy*
- 29% said *a little easy*
- 24% were *not sure where to find help*
- 11% said it was difficult

Survey Highlights- Families Want Their Voices Heard



Many caregivers expressed interest in becoming more involved in leadership and decision-making opportunities within the community.

- 42% said they are interested in leadership opportunities and advocacy
- 31% said *maybe*
- 27% said *no*

Families shared they would feel more prepared to lead if they had:

- 51% – Small stipends or compensation
- 49% – Leadership training or classes
- 42% – Flexible meeting times
- 40% – Mentorship or guidance
- 38% – Childcare during meetings

Survey Highlights- Families Want Their Voices Heard



This feedback reinforces the importance of creating authentic opportunities for family leadership and shared decision-making.

Families said they want opportunities to:

- Join meetings where decisions are made
- Help plan programs and events
- Participate in groups and discussions
- Speak at events and share ideas

Ongoing Daily Challenges



Families identified several ongoing stressors impacting their well-being, including:

- Rising food and living costs
- Transportation barriers
- Difficulty accessing resources
- Limited support systems
- Balancing work, caregiving, and daily responsibilities



Survey Highlights

Challenges

- Learning About Resources
- Resources/ Not enough
- Time for Everything
- Transportation
- Assistance for Childcare
- Potty Training
- Support Network
- Food /natural food for children
- Understanding
- Diapers
- Housing

What Would Help

- Communication and Listening
- Access
- Group Meetings /Support Groups
- Scholarships
- Connection
- Doing events with other parents
- Mom meetups
- Childcare fair
- Clothing swaps especially for expecting moms.



Survey Highlights- Overall Takeaway

The survey reinforced that families want:

- Stronger relationships and community connection
- Easier access to trusted resources
- More family-centered support systems
- Opportunities to share their voice and help shape solutions

The findings support the continued development of community-driven strategies that center family voice, strengthen relationships, and improve coordination across early childhood systems and supports in Alachua County.

Brainstorming: Early Childhood Fair or Symposium



Purpose

- Connect families with local early childhood resources and services
- Provide hand on activities for parent of young children
- Build stronger connections between families and service providers
- Promote access to community resources in one centralized location

Logistics

- Proposed Date/Time/Location
- Community Partners
- Event Set-up
- Family activities
- On-Site Services
- Food & Incentives
- Pre-Registration
- Marketing/Outreach
- Funding

Next Steps

- Finalize Date/Time/Location
- Confirm Community Partnership
- Develop Agenda
- Assign roles and responsibilities
- Launch Event

Early Educators Workgroup

- Elizabeth Woods, Heather Doles, Arlene Lambert, Sylvia Paluzzi, Ritsa Mallous





Priority and Hope to Accomplish

Priority 1

To help early learning classrooms become stronger by using proven ways to support children's behavior and feelings, so children can build social skills, have fewer behavior challenges, teachers and families feel more confident helping them grow, and no child is expelled.

- Exploration of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and blended behavioral support models
- Emphasis on reducing and ultimately eliminating expulsion in early learning settings

Priority 2

Increase teacher pay in early learning classrooms so we can keep great teachers, bring in new ones, and give young children the best care and learning possible.

- Establish a baseline wage of at least \$20 per hour
- Align early educator salaries more closely with public school teacher compensation
- Explore advocacy strategies, including potential increases to School Readiness (SR) reimbursement rates

Priority 3

Explore education and career tracks, professional development, and credentialing through Santa Fe College.

- Supports priority 2.



Key Updates and Recommendations

- **Behavioral Health Framework:** The workgroup engaged a subject matter expert to define ABA and behavioral health supports and review a potential implementation framework.
- **Systems Alignment:** While no current initiative was identified as fully addressing this priority, elements of behavioral health supports are reflected within the Systems Coordination and Resources Workgroup's draft logic model for special need supports.
- **Learning Opportunity:** Meet with Dr. Bishop (Anita Zucker Center) and Ms. Anhalt (Santa Fe College) to explore:
 - The Tools for Teachers Embedded Instruction Model
 - The Early Childhood Support System Chart
- **Data Gaps:** Expulsion data is not currently collected by the Early Learning Coalition (ELC), leaving a gap in understanding the scope of the issue locally.
- **Advocacy:** For educator compensation, the workgroup identified this priority as primarily advocacy- and policy-driven.
- **Education:** The workgroup also initiated exploration of an additional priority focused on strengthening the early educator pipeline and credentialing pathways.

Recommendations

- Workgroup leaders (all APPLE-accredited) are coordinating with Robyn Perlman (BLI) to engage FACCM/APPLE in discussions related to legislative and advocacy strategies.
- Dr. Mallous (Santa Fe College) will be invited to a discussion on developing sustainable pathways for early educators in Alachua County.
- Workgroup is recommending integrating behavioral health modalities into the Systems Coordination and Resources Workgroup's logic model to support a comprehensive, full-spectrum approach.



Next Steps

Completed

- ✓ Reestablished purpose and priorities
- ✓ Engaged new workgroup leadership.
- ✓ Explored and evaluated what is happening internal and external.
- ✓ Decided on what is needed to move forward.
- ✓ Spoke with subject matter experts.
- ✓ Scheduled meeting with APPLE.
- ✓ Look for data on expulsion rates.

Next Steps

- Meeting with Dr. Ritsa Mallous
- Meeting with FACCM/APPLE
- Draft plan and Timeline.
- Consider market rate study through survey.

Systems and Resources

- Bonnie Bowman, Terri Robinson, and Dorothy Thomas, Crystal Bishop, Darbi Shannon, Dr. Christine Myers

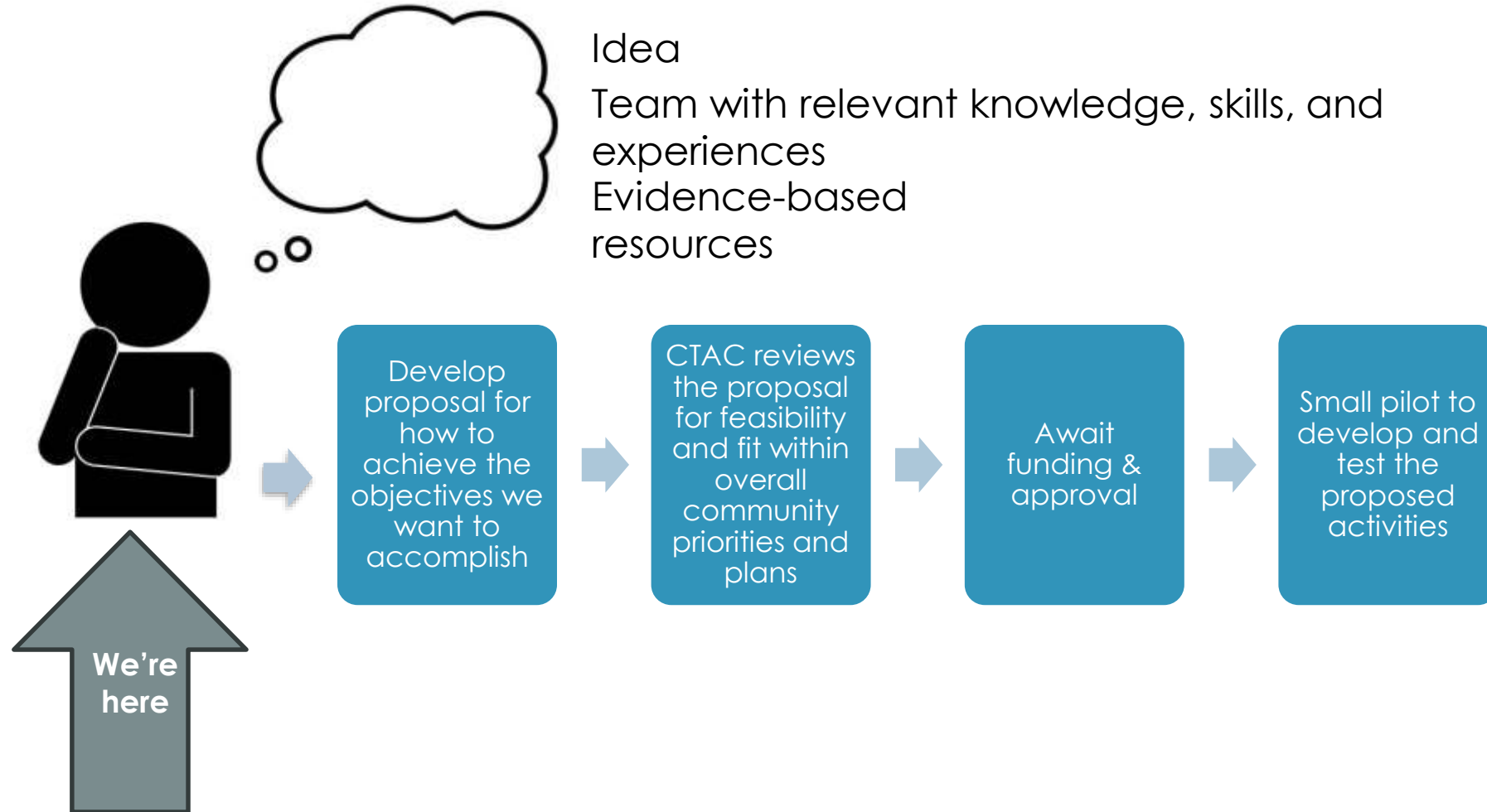


What are we
trying to
accomplish?

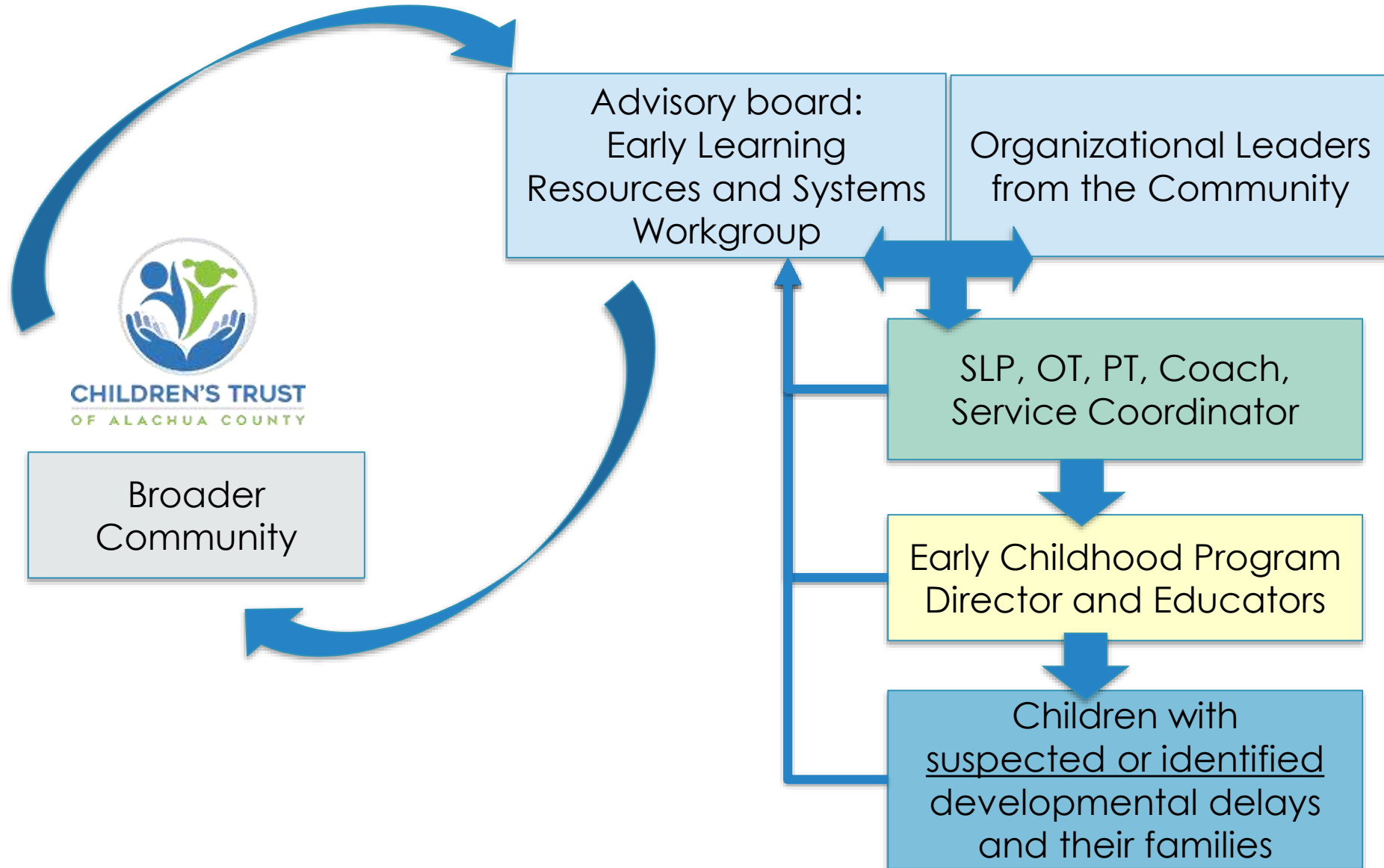
Objective: Build capacity within early learning programs in Alachua County to provide high-quality supports and services to children with suspected or identified developmental delays.

- œ Develop a transdisciplinary team that supports **referral and identification** of children with developmental delays, in addition to providing job-embedded **professional learning supports** to early educators and program directors
- œ Enhance early educators' use of **individualized learning supports** for children **within everyday classroom routines**
- œ Promote **partnerships** between early learning programs and families that result in **coordination of services** and continuity of supports across contexts

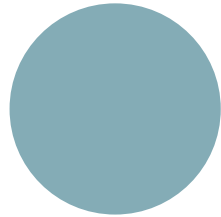
EC Systems and Resources Path Forward



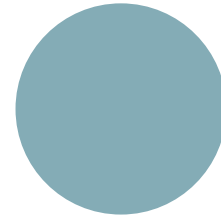
Who's Engaged?



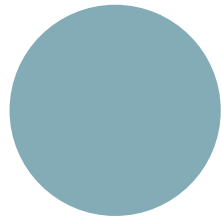
What else do I need to know?



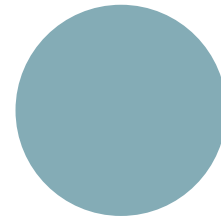
Transdisciplinary
Teaming
(TT)



Data-Informed
Decision Making
(DIDM)



Practice-Based
Coaching
(PBC)



Embedded
Learning Supports
(ELS)

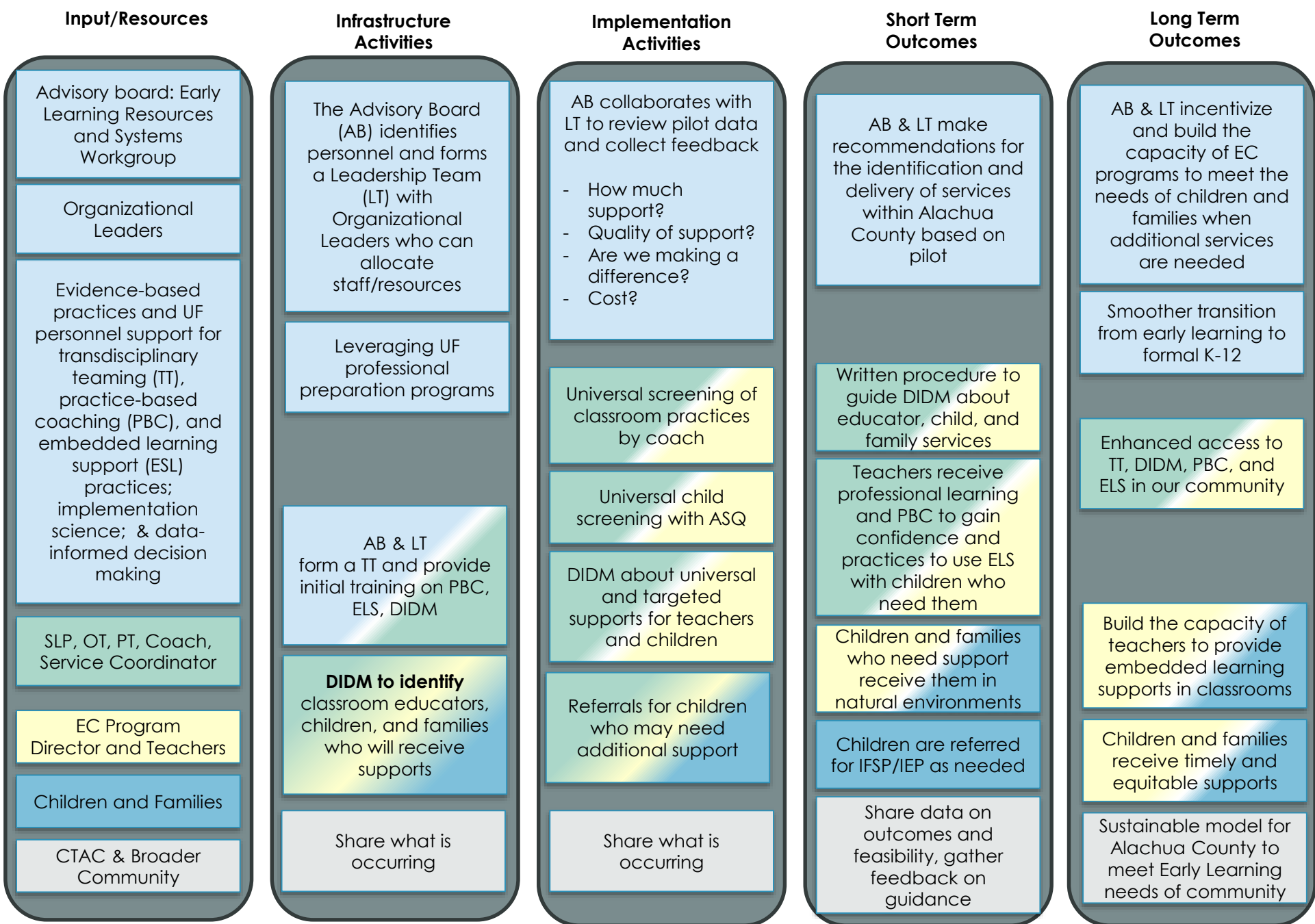
Definitions

TT – the team works together across disciplines (SLP, OT, PT, Coach) to share ideas and strategies to support the EC professional, child, and family, but there is one primary person who engages with the EC provider, child, and family for continuity

DIDM – Collect and use data about child progress, teacher's skills, and program level supports, use numeric data along with the knowledge and experiences of professionals and families to make decisions

PBC – PBC is a job-embedded coaching support that helps adults learn new practices or skills. In our community, PBC is regularly used by the ELC to support EC professionals in learning about and using effective classroom practices. In our research, we've used it to help teams learn about, share, and use individualized supports.

ELS – Embedded Learning Supports children receive individualized support alongside peers in their everyday classroom routines and activities





Breakout Rooms (30-45 MINS)

Each workgroup will have dedicated breakout time. Please identify:

- A facilitator
- A note-taker
- A spokesperson

Room 1- Thriving Parents

Room 2- Early Educators

Room 3- Systems and Resources



Breakout Rooms (45 MINS)

Use this time as needed, and also consider the following:

- What is the one action we are ready to stand behind as a workgroup, and what would it take to launch it?
- If I walked into a classroom, home, or center, what would I see?
- How will I know this worked? Barriers that need to be addressed?
- What are the next 2-3 actions in the next 30-60 days and who is responsible for each action?
- If we only had funding for one thing, what would we choose?



Reflection (15 MINS)

- Key action/priority
- Immediate next steps
- Where do you see overlap with another workgroup?
- What do you need from another group to move your work forward?
- What is one recommendation that should rise to the full Collaborative level?
- Your next workgroup meeting date (if applicable)

Thriving Parents

Early Educators

Systems and
Resources

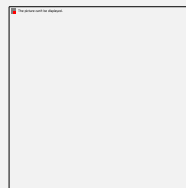
Meeting Dates



May 12, 2026



July 14, 2026
(Small Group)



Sept 15, 2026
(In Person)



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Thank you!