

DHLW+M Early Childhood Area

Des Moines, Henry, Louisa, Washington

April 15th 2025

5:00pm

Location: online

Zoom meeting ID: 849 6850 5938

Passcode: 090177

Minutes

Members Present: Matt Latcham, Tricia Lipski, Shawn Maine, Cyndi Mears, Mike Steele, Unity Stevens, Paris White

Members Absent: Jim Cary, Melody Raub, Stan Stoops Paris White

Advisory members and guests present: Tasha Beghtol, Kalisha Lutz, Jen Craft, Shane Orr, Rachel Patterson-Rahn, Jojo Green, Toni Krana, Amy McLaughlin, Melissa Tucker, Ginger Knisley, Jacki McCracken

Meeting was called to order by Cyndi Mears at 5:07pm with a quorum present.

Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda, March 18th 2025 minutes, and administrative update as presented.

Moved: Shawn Maine **Seconded:** Tricia Lipski

Motion carried unanimously

Financial Report

Tasha Beghtol reviewed the financial summaries and the monthly postings report from Central Iowa Juvenile Detention Center. The report reflects 7 months of program spending. Preschool Scholarships is low at only 34%, but they plan to implement some strategies and spend down more. The 4th quarter payments from the state have been received. Tasha Beghtol noted that the total spent is off by \$0.01. The discrepancy is in SR-Admin and may be a simple rounding error. If not resolved next month, Tasha will work with CIJDC to find the error.

Motion to accept the financial summaries as presented

Moved: Mike Steele **Seconded:** Shawn Maine

Motion carried unanimously

Preschool Scholarship Policy Exemption

Tasha Beghtol shared that Sunny Day preschool in Des Moines County has recently gone through staff changes and the expiration date of the IQ4K rating got overlooked. Due to pending changes in ECI and only 2 months of the school left, the program is asking for a temporary exemption. Families will retain scholarships as is through the end of the year.

Motion to approve a temporary exemption to Sunny Day Preschool for the quality criteria requirements in DHLW+M Policy 4.10.

Moved: Tricia Lipski **Seconded:** Mike Steele

Motion carried unanimously

FY26 Funding Process

Tasha Beghtol reviewed a draft application for renewals from currently funded programs. Regardless of the uncertain transitions for ECI areas the state requires all ECI Area budgets to be uploaded into iowagrants by June 1st. Timeline revisions to the draft document are to release the RFR on April 21st with a due date of May 9th.

Motion to approve the Request For Renewal (RFR) application and documents with revised timeline.

Moved by Tricia Lipski **Seconded** by Cyndi Mears

Motion carried unanimously

Administrative update

A written report was provided.

Meeting adjourned by Chair at 5:55pm

Minutes submitted by Tasha Beghtol, Director

Approved on _May 20th 2025_____

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Administrative Update

APRIL 2025

ECI Update

The ECI State Board met on April 11th 2025. ECI meeting information can be found on the [Iowa HHS website under 'public meetings'](#) and members from the public are welcome to attend. April 11th agenda items included:

- Funding Formula – The board approved a new funding formula for FY26. The original formula included a variable related to the size (square miles) of each county. The new formula replaces that with children who have 3 or more risk factors at birth. The formula is used to determine each EACI Area portion of the total allocation. New FY26 formula is 33% (0-5, 185% FPL), 33% (0-5 population), 34% (3 or more risk factors at birth).
- Tool O – The agenda was amended to have this item as information only, not action. Tool O identifies the types of services that an ECI Area may fund. The original plan for this agenda item was to remove service types that will be funded by Child Care Development funds in FY26. The item was table until the June 6th 2025 ECI State Board meeting.

ECI Directors meetings

- Director Garcia met virtually with all ECI Area Directors on April 10th to provide time for discussion about transition and local area changes. Information shared included clarification that the Continuum of Care grants will be determined and managed by the state, not the ECI Districts. The Districts will provide input on the process. The scope of involvement from the ECI Districts is unknown at this time, and subject to final legislation.
- An ECI Directors meeting was held with the state off on April 10th 2025. State staff shared plans for Family Support Home Visitation budgets and contracts leading into FY26. A standard template will be provided by the state office for local areas to use with Family Support Home Visitation(HV) contractors. A unified rate for HV services is recommended as the state prepares for IVE (federal funding related to evidenced based HV) drawdown opportunities.

Childcare

- Stakeholders from WEDG, DHLW+M, Washington County Hospital and YMCA have established a non-profit organization, Creative Sprouts Champions Inc, that will focus on initiatives that support childcare professionals and businesses in Washington Co. The 501c3 paperwork is in progress and a slate of board members has been confirmed. The organization is striving to begin fundraising and awareness efforts by the summer 2025.
- A workgroup was convened by United Way of Muscatine to discuss childcare issues and potential solutions in Muscatine County. The committee reviewed survey results from centers and homes in Muscatine county regarding staff wages and business details. The committee has identified priorities for ways to support childcare centers in the county and will hold its next meeting on April 14th 2025.

Southeast Iowa Early Childhood Summit 2025

- The family concerts and resource fairs were held on March 21st and 22nd. Williamsburg had 14 children/17 adults and Keokuk had 22 children/29 adults. The Burlington concert was held in conjunction with Day of the Child organized by Community Action of SE Iowa. The event was well attended with an estimated 150 children. Approximately 100 of those children were under the age of 6 yrs.
- A childcare conference will be held on April 26th at the Belle Center (former Iowa Wesleyan Library) in Mt Pleasant. The conference is free of charge and includes 6 hrs of HHS approved credit for childcare professionals. Registration for all sessions can be found on the I-Power Training Registry.



Jim Gill concert at Westland Mall in Burlington on March 22, 2025

Other Office Tidbits

- ECI Districts - District 6 & 7 continue to meet regularly and have developed Board Elect member lists. Membership lists were provided to the state ECI office as requested. District 6 is currently planning for an introductory meeting of the Board Elect on April 28th.
- FY24 audit for DHLW has started. The state Auditor's office has requested and received copies of 5 randomly selected claims and DHLW fiscal tracking information.
- FY23 audit is unfinished. The DHLW portion of the overall CIJDC audit was finished spring of 2024, but the final audit report has not been received.