



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa
Leadership Room
October 23, 2024

Voting Members Present: Suzanne Cohrs, Kevin Abler, Dave Arens, Rob Barron, Jessica Bruning, Alicia Chilton, Tabitha Choquette, Sam Early, Stephanie Giusto, Matthew Klemme, Josh Laraby, Crhistian Ramirez, Shay Scholtes, Megan Schultheis, Emily Westergaard; Eva Morales and Stephen White participated via Zoom

Voting Members Absent: Adam Montufar, Eric Tubbs

Ex-Officio Members Present: Brook Rosenberg

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aaron Johnson

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Lora Patton, Region 4 Director, Child Care Resource & Referral; Amanda Winslow, Bureau Chief, Early Childhood Services Division of Family Well-Being and Protection, Early Intervention and Support; Adriana Flores, Healthy Start Manager and Cindy Winn, Healthy Start Director, both with EveryStep

Welcome

Board Chair Suzanne Cohrs welcomed members and called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 11:31 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

Approval September Minutes

Minutes of board meeting September 25, 2024, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the September 2024 minutes was made by Emily Westergaard and seconded by Alicia Chilton. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

September FY25 Financial Report

Matthew Klemme presented the September FY25 financial report. End of September is 25% through the fiscal year. Expenditures are tracking with historical data. Klemme noted new contracts in School Ready are highlighted in blue on the full expenditure report. School districts are just beginning to submit invoicing for the Preschool Programming Support funding.

School Ready

- FY25 School Ready funding is \$2,975,693
- Carry Forward funds total \$289,442.42
- FY25 Total School Ready funds \$3,265,135.42

- Interest accrued through September 2024 totals \$4,104.23
- Expended School Ready funds end of September 2024 total \$305,991.43
- At the end of September 2024 9% of School Ready had been expended. End of previous September 2023 10% of funds had been expended.

Early Childhood

- FY25 Early Childhood funding is \$973,992
- Carry Forward funds total \$154,722.63
- FY25 Total Early Childhood funds \$1,128,714.63
- Interest accrued through August 2024 totals \$1,835.64
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of September 2024 total \$111,181.69
- At end of September 2024 10% of Early Childhood had been expended. End of previous September 2023 7% of funds had been expended.

A motion to approve the September FY25 Financial Report was made by Dave Arens and seconded by Kevin Abler. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

HHS Early Childhood Services: Early Childhood Iowa Updates

Bremner introduced Amanda Winslow, HHS Bureau Chief, Early Childhood Services Division of Family Well-Being and Protection, Early Intervention and Support.

Winslow shared two staff positions will be filled in November to provide technical assistance to Early Childhood Iowa and Family Support Services. Winslow’s presentation *Early Intervention and Support* provided an overview of HHS Bureau Early Childhood Services, Family Services, and Community Services a division of Family Well-Being and Protection, Early Intervention and Support. She detailed the programs within each department, the structure, focus, and several corresponding initiatives. Winslow shared the bureau “north star” of “More Good Days for Families.” She spoke of the guiding framework of “Hope Science.” She discussed in detail the pilot initiative of “Thrive Iowa,” a new coordinated intake system being piloted in five ECI areas.

Administrative Report

Bremner’s Administrative Report was included with today’s materials.

- Bremner congratulated Emily Westergaard on her appointment by Governor Reynolds to serve on the ECI State Board.
- The next ECI State Board meeting will be held November 1st from 9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Association’s October professional development focused on wage enhancement.
- Bremner and Cohrs will attend the Association’s Annual Meeting November 14th from 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in West Des Moines.
- Bremner thanked members for the donations towards the membership fees of the Association of ECI Area Boards and Advocates. Thirteen donations were received totaling \$1,700, making up 39% of Polk County ECI’s membership fee. This total shows the board commitment to the Association.
- Association lobbyist Eide/ Walton will present at the November board meeting.
- Bremner has been working with coalition centers supported by the new operational grant. The ECQuIP team will provide an update on the centers utilizing the operational grant funding at the December meeting.

- Dates for the FY25 social dates are included in today's report.
- An update from EMBARC's October newsletter on their Parent Navigator program is included in today's report.
- Bremner and board member Adam Montufar and his children, attended Knock & Drop's event October 16th.
- ICOACH and AIRTS are holding fundraising events in October and November.

Old Business

- Cohrs thanked members who donated towards the Association membership fee.

New Business

- Rob Barron shared he participates on the Capitol Crossroads Steering Committee. A recent meeting raised the idea of developing a registered apprenticeship program for high school students interested in working in child care. Lora Patton volunteered to provide information on similar projects to the committee.

Public Comment

- Patton shared CCR&R the mini-grant program Reach For The Stars is generating a lot of interest from child care providers, perhaps because the federal funding which was going to child care providers as support during the pandemic has stopped.
- CCR&R staff are working with centers on updating their information in the new Iowa Child Care Connect dashboard. Keeping this information up to date is critical for families looking for childcare.
- CCR&R staff have been making connections with large employers in the metro to determine ways to provide assistance to staff in enrolling children in quality childcare.
- Cindy Winn shared 70 families participated in EveryStep's 3rd Annual Roll Baby Roll infant mortality event in September.
- EveryStep has been receiving a high number of community referrals. Adriana Flores is working to create more group-based parent learning opportunities for families not necessarily needing one-on-one support.

Adjournment

Westergaard made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Chilton seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Cohrs adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.