



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING

United Way of Central Iowa

Leadership Room

November 19, 2025

Voting Members Present: Alicia Chilton, Kevin Abler, Dave Arens, Gabrielle Brooks, Jessica Bruning, Sam Early, Matthew Klemme, Shay Scholtes, Megan Schultheis; Participating via Teams Tabitha Choquette, Suzanne Cohrs, Josh Laraby, Christian Ramirez

Voting Members Absent: Jake Al-Mazroa, Stephanie Giusto, Eric Tubbs, Stephen White

Ex-Officio Members Present: Brook Rosenberg

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aaron Johnson, Emily Westergaard

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Sharon Ndikurugamba, Director, and Immaculee Butare, Assistant Director, both African Immigrants and Refugees Transition Services(AIRTS); Abigail Sui, Executive Director, and Lal Muani, Early Childhood Parent Navigator Program Manager, both EMBARC; Brianne Emunah, Case Manager, Molly Gosselink, Vice President of Community Health Services, and Cindy Winn, Healthy Start Director, all with EveryStep; Tammy Engebretson, Director of Quality Initiatives, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children; Jazzmine Brooks, Executive Director, Jai Olive; Linda Brown, Young Moms Program Manager, Young Women's Resource Center; via Teams Alyssa Barton, Service Coordinator, Lutheran Services in Iowa

Welcome

Board Chair Alicia Chilton welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

Approval October and November 4 Minutes

Minutes of board meeting October 22, 2025, and special board meeting November 4, 2025, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the October and November 4, 2025 minutes was made by Dave Arens and seconded by Sam Early. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

October FY26 Financial Report

Shay Scholtes presented the October FY26 financial report. Expenditures are tracking as expected. First quarter Wage Enhancement payments have been paid to the centers, including Capitol Park. Remaining Capitol Park contracted funds have been moved to the non-contracted line on the budget. The Healthy Birthday Community Baby Shower contract has been issued utilizing non-contracted funds.

EveryStep was delayed in submitting their September invoice, Bremner has been in contact with them. Des Moines Public School District has not submitted an invoice for FY26. Bremner confirmed they did submit an invoice November 14th.

A motion to approve the October FY26 financials was made by Kevin Abler and seconded by Jessica Bruning. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

IAEYC Funding Request

Bremner reviewed two funding requests from the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children. She met with Jillian Henrick, Executive Director, and Tammy Engebretson, Director of Quality Initiatives, to develop the two proposals: support center directors with focused leadership professional development and to provide scholarships of 50% for Polk County child care providers to attend the IAEYC Spring Institute. Prior to developing the proposal for director professional development Bremner confirmed with HHS Staff Amanda Winslow, Amanda McKee and Liz Ernst that this contract was allowable. Chilton and Scholtes were included on this email communication.

The Director Leadership and Professional Development project for \$45,313 would fund intensive center director support for Polk County coalition centers serving a high percentage of CCA families. The project would support up to 20 directors with a six-month contract. Engebretson stated the project could continue into the following year if funding was available.

The Polk County Early Care and Education Scholarship contract for \$10,500 would support scholarships for Polk County child care staff attending the IAEYC Spring Institute. The funding would cover 50% of center registration costs for approximately 167 center staff attending the conference.

Given connections with IAEYC both Sam Early and Dave Arens abstained.

A motion to approve funding for the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children projects totaling \$55,813.00 was made by Megan Schultheis and seconded by Shay Scholtes. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Awareness (Maternal Health) Presentations

Jazzmine Brooks, Executive Director, Jai Olive, presented the program's key services, supports and next steps.

Abigail Sui, Executive Director, and Lal Muani, Early Childhood Parent Navigator Program Manager, with EMBARC presented on the Early Childhood Parent Navigator program, the supports the program provides for families and their community and the barriers their families face due to current federal policies.

Sharon Ndikurugamba, Director, and Immaculee Butare, Assistant Director, with African Immigrants and Refugees Transition Services (AIRTS) presented on the history of the organization, the services they offer, programming and a look ahead at future goals.

Linda Brown, Young Moms Program Manager, Young Women's Resource Center, spoke about the Young Moms Program, highlighting the work of the Postpartum, Parenting and Life Skills Group and the Individual Support Program funded by the board.

Administrative Report

Bremner reported the December meeting will focus on the upcoming legislative session. The next ECI State Board meeting will be in December. Bremner will share meeting details when available.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Brook Rosenberg inquired about the overlap of program services and if there is some type of database for programs to share resources.

Cindy Winn, EveryStep, shared their agency holds quarterly meetings for maternal health partners which provide learning opportunities and networking sessions for agencies to share resources. The next meeting will be December 8th at 3:30 p.m. in the United Way Conference Center and invited members to attend. EveryStep has a resource page on their website.

Chilton thanked members for the extra time in November to review and approve the letter to the Early Childhood Iowa State Board sharing the boards concerns on the continued push for regionalization into districts.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Sam Early made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Kevin Abler seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chilton adjourned the meeting at 9:38 a.m.