

Early Childhood Iowa State Board: Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2025; 9:00am to 11:00am

Attendance:

Mr. Aaron Johnson (Chair)	X	Ms. Melissa Miller	X
Mr. Michael Linnenbrink (Vice Chair)	X	Mr. Dave Muhlbauer	X
Ms. Angela Anderson	X	Mr. Brook Rosenberg	
Mr. Dave Arens	X	Ms. Paige Smothers	X
Ms. Jennifer Banta	X	Ms. Unity Stevens	X
Ms. Mayra Martinez	X	Ms. Emily Westergaard	X
Director Durham /Ms. Nichole Hansen (IEDA)	X	Director Townsend /Ms. Kathy Leggett (IWD)	X
Director Garcia	X	Director Snow /Dr. Kimberly Villotti (IDOE)	X
Janee Harvey		Ms. Mary Peterson Joined at 9:16am	X
<i>Staff</i>		<i>EX-Officio/Non-voting</i>	
Amanda Winslow	X	Rep. Michael Bergan	X
Dr. Ann Lebo	X	Rep. Tracey Ehlert	
Amanda McKee	X	Sen. Cindy Winckler	
Liz Ernst	X	Sen. Lynn (Kevin) Evans	

Guests:

PJ West, Abigail Degenhardt, Tammy Wetjen-Kesterson, Diane Martens, Lacey Waller, Rozy Warder, Tasha Beghtol, Angel Smith, Holly Rash, Jordan Morse, Liz Melcher, Liz Macke, Liz Crane, Jess Burger, Mary Kay Wirth, Renee Rankin, Amy McLaughlin, Mayra Martinez, Salena Siefken, Pat McReynolds, Brenda Loop, Jenny Robinson, Ginger Knisley, Gaylyn Mercer, Monica Garner, Elizabeth Stanek, Beth Ownby, Michele Cullen, Carrie Kube, Suzanne Cohrs, Molly Gosswink, Cyndi Mears, Sherri Hunt, Patricia Russman, Cindy Duhrkopf, Angie Anderson, Erin Monaghan, James Olson, Dawn Sickelka, Cass Mura, Mallory Berkenpas, Amy Blanchard, Kerri Hall, Laurie Nash, Shawna Lebeck, Lisa Hilsenbeck, Annette Koster, Erin Harrison, Melissa Tucker, Gloria Carr, Heather Rouse, Dawn Lero, Molly Gosselink, Julie Edwards, Heidi Kramer, Jen Roberts, Mary DeLong, Renee Rankin, McKinley Bailey, Alejandro Pino, Meridith Myers, Jessie Hansen, April L. Yusten Adams, Ryan Dokter, Erin Harrison, Lew Everling, Jodi, Christy Brown, Melissa Juhl, Mary Breyfogle, Kassie Ruth, Amy Grunewaldt, Laurie Kristiansen, Amy McLaughlin, Linda Havelka, Mindy Baylor, Lisa Hilsenbeck, Alexius Aguiar, Kathy Lerma, Abby Patterson, Rachael Ostermyer, Deena

Recker, Peggy Wood, Kevin Grieme, Dawn Lero, Sheila Hansen, Adriana Flores, Amy Glade, Yesenia Cruz, James Olson, Cass Des Moines, Crystal Duvall, Chris Castrey, Christi Regan, Cyndi Louisa County, Lexy Klemish, Floyd County, J S, Barry Anderson, Deacon Mike, Bailey Vant Hul, Jessica Lange, Jillian Herink, Sam Early, Treyla Lee, Sarah Vanwyk, Molly Gosselink, Claire Carlson, Sheri Penney, Jay - CUCCC, Brianne Wilson, Josh Laraby, Terry ---, Jenna Fleener, Kristen Peyton, Julie Hanlin, Amber Kollbaum, Alisha Dietzenbach, Kristy Roosa, Lora Patton, Erin Hall, Nancy Krause, Darnell Austin, Ashley Otte, Katy Carey, Erika Fuentes, Sarah Hogan, Kelsey Thien, Bailey Hill, Alyssa Garbiso, Taylor Nagle, Kristie Nixon, Athena Porter, Carrie Soddors, Page Humphrey, Karen Smith, Jessica Ryan, Shelley Conover, Jacki McCracken, Garrett Ross, Trisha Christensen, Rebekah Hungate, Native American Child Care Center, Amy Stegeman, Carrie Malone, Jean Logan

Non-board Members In the room:

Ryan Page, Wendy Hooegeveen, Shelley Horak, Nick Crawford, Sarah Ekstrand, Barb Bremner, Tony Reed, Deb Schrader

Meeting Proceedings

Welcome / Introductions

Chair Aaron Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:06am. Amanda McKee reminded online participants to display their full names. Attendance was taken, and a quorum was confirmed.

Amanda Winslow proposed a change to the agenda to move Action Item "Tool O" to an informational item. The change was approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Deb Shrader: At Condition of State Gov Reynolds praised ECI. Yesterday, local directors were told that Continuum of Care will be administered through Iowa Grants. Funds will be pulled from local services and that is not the intent.

McKinley Bailey: sent an email last night, will read it now. Appreciate the change in the agenda. Wants community collaboration and frank conversation.

Carrie Kube: 15 years as ECI director, has participated in thoughtful change in the past. These transitions require increase in time and participation. Change in director leadership has not been shared yet. If you approve moving to 7 districts today, we need funding for that transition.

Patricia Russman: 24 years, 9 county board with regional PAT affiliate, believed until yesterday that evidence-based family support would be protected. New funding formula given yesterday is over \$250,000 less than what we currently invest in our 9 counties.

We would be able to serve 8 families per county and not meet our MIECHV requirements. Thought we were being good partners, feels like we are being punished. I may have to terminate half of those contracts and lay off half of those staff.

Laurie Nash: not an official ECI director, filling that role now because we've lost 2 directors in 2 years due to uncertainty. This does not impact my job so that's not why I'm here. Our county relies on that funding for a number of services for very at-risk families. There are no other options if we lose these programs. Feel that what we've been telling families is now not true. This could decimate the system and that has me concerned.

Kerri Hall: speaking on behalf of programs served with ECI funding in Ida and Woodbury counties to serve the most at risk and vulnerable youth. We've been told by Sen. Evans that there will be other funding to sustain these programs. When we saw the budget yesterday, that isn't close to what is needed to sustain programs. Please give us a little more time. Please allow ECI funds to be status quo for FY26 so we can create a runway.

Barry Anderson: Started with introduction of self then expressed lots of concerns with funding and timing. Make sure this doesn't just get pushed through.

Tammy Wetjen-Kesterson: Been a part of the ECI from beginning. Shocked yesterday that proposed Continuum of Care dollars would not be administered locally rather by the state. Top-down approach risks loss in funding with school partnerships or registered homes which will cause a breakdown of our fragile infrastructure that we've built in our communities.

Action Items

Consent Agenda

Approval of:

- Agenda
- March 7, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion: Dave Arens

Second: Paige Smothers

Outcome: Passed unanimously

Board Leadership

Amanda Winslow provided an overview of board leadership nominations. Aaron Johnson expressed willingness to serve as Vice Chair; Emily Westergaard was nominated for Chair.

Motion: Mike Linnenbrink
Second: Mayra Martinez
Outcome: Passed unanimously

Funding Formula Proposal

Amanda Winslow presented:

- Strategy to expand evidence-based home visitation (Healthy Families America and Parents as Teachers)
- Proposal to merge Early Childhood and School Ready funds into a single, unrestricted fund
- Formula prioritizing areas with three or more risk factors at birth

Legislative & Board Concerns:

- Rep. Bergan questioned the removal of land size from the formula
- Jennifer Banta and others cited limited review time
- Melissa Miller asked about short-term program support
- Dave Muhlbauer questioned the need to bundle all changes into one vote
- The board discussed the pros and cons of using data to inform decisions. The proposed new formula was based on 33% calculated for the 0-5 aged population per county, 33% calculated for the 0-5 aged population per county at 185% of the federal poverty level, and 34% calculated on utilizing data from Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision-Making (I2D2) with known 3 or more risk factors at birth, per county. This approach applies funding to be distributed to counties with relevant needs for the age group and factors focused on early childhood.

Initial Motion: Emily Westergaard
Second: Dave Arens
Action: Motion rescinded at 10:37am

Final Motion: Approve updated funding formula, combining Early Childhood and School Ready into one fund, using a risk-based formula, and including SFY25 carry-forward funds to go into an unrestricted bucket for use in SFY26, per an approved budget.

Motion: Emily Westergaard
Second: Dave Arens
Outcome: Passed 11–3

Next Steps:

- Distribute data and projections to board and ECI Directors
- Monitor transition impacts

- Plan follow-up sessions for ongoing evaluation

FY26 PD Funds Usage

Annually, there is a reserve of up to \$825,030 for state-level professional development support for the early childhood workforce via an array of initiatives aligned with the focus of early learning; health, mental health, and nutrition; special needs; and family support. The SFY2026 use of professional development funds were shared to be used for the following purposes: Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health endorsement and professional development (\$101,050), DAISEY data base update and maintenance (\$50,000), the Iowa Family Support Credential (\$175,000), T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Iowa (\$339,000).

Motion: Dave Arens

Second: Kimberly Villotti

Outcome: Passed unanimously

Informational Item: Tool O

Due to time constraints, discussion postponed to June 6, 2025, meeting. To address additional questions regarding Tool O, the ECI TA Team will be hosting additional workgroups in May. Results from the workgroups and feedback loops will be presented for an action item at the June 6, 2025, board meeting.

Motion to Table: Emily Westergaard

Second: Dave Arens

Outcome: Motion passed

Adjournment

Next Meeting:

Date: June 6, 2025

Time: 9:00am – 11:00am

Remaining 2025 Meeting Dates (9:00am – 12:00pm):

- January 3
- March 7
- June 6
- September 5
- November 7
- **Motion to Adjourn:** Emily Westergaard
- **Second:** Angela Anderson
- **Adjourned:** 11:02am

