Cheyenne, Kiowa, Lincoln County Early Childhood Council
Council and Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

cklecc.org
719-775-8622
Supporting children, families, and early childhood programs in Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Lincoln Counties.

December 1st, 2025 / 1:05 PM

CKLECC Board Meeting

ATTENDEES:

In-Person: Julie Witt (Council Coordinator); Lora White (CKLECC Admin. Assistant); Haley Leonard (CKLECC Financial Manager); Heather Randolph (Board Chair, Baby Bear Hugs); Carole Spady (CKLECC Quality Improvement Coach); Katie Zipperer (Limon Memorial Library)

Zoom: Lisa Thomas (About F.A.C.E.); Sharon Mauch (About F.A.C.E); TyAnn Connley (SafeCare); Kathleen Bither (Kiowa County DSS); Shannon Harrell (Centennial Mental Health); Amber Smelker (Parent/Treasurer); Autumn Pelton (Cheyenne County Communities that Care, Cheyenne County Public Health); Kailey Meardon (About F.A.C.E.); Jane Tallman (Cheyenne County DHS); Autumn Lorenson (Board Vice Chair, Center Director LCDC); Kandi Seymour (Service Coordinator/Case Manager at ECSDD); Katie Richardson (Lantern)

Absent Board Members and Staff: Terry Jaques (Lincoln County Commissioner); Robbin Schincke (Morgan Community College); Candie Chamberlain (CKLECC FFN Program Coordinator); Rosalind Smith (The Cornerstone Resource Center);

MEETING CALLED BY:

Heather Randolph (Board Chair, Baby Bear Hugs)

BOARD MEETING AGENDA.

Lantern Program- Katie Richardson

- Katie shared that the Lantern Program has previously been known as Bright by Text, Bright by Three and many other names but has been reformed following the same principles.
- The program started in 1995 and serves all 50 states.
- Families can sign up by texting COKIDS to 274448
- Lantern offers 3 types of content
    - Age based content
    - Topic based content (hearing, speech, bonding, meals, health)
    - Location based content
- Families who sign up can expect to receive 1-3 messages per week
- The program offers a whole child-whole family approach
- There are 3 other more focused programs now being offered as well:
    - BOND Program for infants 0-1 (text BOND to 274448)
    - ASD Program for families dealing with Autism Spectrum Disorder (text ASD to 274448)
        - This is a 9 month program
        - Lantern received over 5,000 sign-ups in the first week
    - FFN Program for family, friend and neighbor care providers (text FFN to 274448)
        - This program shares information about tax credits, PD trainings, child development and other provider resources to license exempt providers
- Katie will share a resource folder and enrollment numbers for our counties with Julie via email
- Anyone is welcome to email her with further questions at Katie@mylantern.org

November Meeting Minutes - Heather Randolph

- Autumn L. motioned to approve the minutes as presented and Katie seconded. The motion carried.

LCO/UPK Updates - Julie Witt

- Julie reports that all of our programs submitted their 26-27 set-up forms in time for CDEC to complete the set-up process
- Julie will need to cancel the monthly update call for December due to a scheduling conflict. She reports that there has not been great attendance at our monthly calls despite polling providers on the most convenient meeting time and switching to that.
- Reconciliation payment forms are due by Dec. 5th for any programs needed to reconcile previous payments.
- The Northeast regional meeting was held a few weeks ago. A few items that were covered include:
    - We will have a new Northeast regional coordinator, Emily Russell, Caitlyn Russel, has moved into a new role.
    - The future LCO budget is uncertain but it sounds likely that it will be cut in half. We should have a more solid update in January on what those numbers will look like.
- Providers need to keep an eye out for memos from the state in regards to 3 year old guidance on reporting and payments
- Metrix (the online software used by UPK has been updated to no longer show IEP students so the data reported on there should be more accurate.

Coordinator Report- Julie Witt

- Julie reported that the provider appreciation paint and sip night was a success. There were 20 in attendance.
- We are preparing to send out our annual Christmas books to each program before they are closed for the holiday break.
- Our annual calendar plans are underway. We had planned to recognize our 3 long-term home providers but we are not getting a great response so we will need to adjust our plan
- The Eastern Colorado Bank grant is due to be spent by the end of December. A few ideas are to fulfill Kayla Buchanan's request for a year long subscription to an app she uses to track attendance, payroll and parent communications at a cost of $500 (half of the cost of the subscription we had previously helped with), creating mailers with CKLECC information and upcoming activities, items and supplies for

a future event with local partners (hopefully in January), or mini grant support for FFN providers. It was decided to do a final vote in the board portion of today's meeting.

- 3 providers have signed up for the Rural Care Network with Early Milestones.
- Shannon Hill finished the licensing process and is now a licensed provider.
- Julie is still trying to gather more information about the Local Lead Model being formulated by CO Children's Campaign and ECCLA. Julie is wondering how it will look to coordinate the council work and LCO work. ECCLA has said not to worry about it just yet.

Kiowa County Mural Location- Julie Witt

- Julie reports that she had sent out an email last week requesting for the board to review and give input on the two possible locations for the Kiowa county mural. One is the building owned by the Harris family at Sheridan Lake and the other is in Eads on the pharmacy wall.
- Haley feels that we can provide a minimum of $7,000 from our budget this year.
- Some Girls and a Mural liked the idea of a wrap-around mural on the Harris' building to be visible from both highways passing by.
- Carole shared that Kim Harris, the owner of the Sheridan Lake building, has an early childhood background and hosts a community pumpkin patch at their farm each fall. They believe there were nearly 500 attendees at the pumpkin patch this year.
- The Eads location will be visible to locals who are visiting the grocery store or pharmacy.
- The overall vote by CKLECC staff is for the Harris building, Heather said she likes that location as well.
- Lisa wondered if we were having any conversations about doing more murals in each community. If so we can do one in Eads later on. Haley says it would depend on funding each year.
- Amber and Kathleen both feel like the Harris' will be a better location.
- It was decided to do a final vote on the location in the board portion of today's meeting.

Coaches Report- Carole Spady

- Carole has 6 sites signed up for Quality Improvement this year. 2 are still needing to sign their MOU's and then Carole can begin coaching.
- Ratings will be paused in July 2026 for the state to review the rating process and make any necessary changes.
- Carole completed the renewal of her Early Childhood Professional Credential.

FFN Report- Julie Witt for Candie Chamberlain

- In November we put together folders with information about PDIS, the tax credits for FFN providers and other relevant information. These were mailed out to all FFN providers.
- In December Candie will distribute supply caddies similar to the ones we gave to licensed providers.
- We have had one new FFN provider contact us from Limon. She is excited to participate and have her name shared with families that call looking for care.

Child Care Updates- Lora White

- Lora reported that the diaper bank is still consistent with numbers. The only change would be that we are looking for a location in Cheyenne Wells to offer diaper drop off service.
- Lora and Julie joined the most recent Lincoln County Housing committee meeting. There were some updates on community push back on building new affordable housing as well as other housing project ideas. Doug Ratzlaff with Superior Builders said he would contact us soon with information about one of the Denver Cutlery homes being remodeled to work for home child care as they have a family friend looking to move back to the area that would like to offer licensed home care.

Council Updates

- Kandi Seymour shared that it is business as usual with referrals being processed for all kinds of developmental needs.

Financials/Expenditures/Checks for November- Haley Leonard

- Haley provided the Check Detail Report for November. Checks included – QuickBooks Payroll Service, EFTPS, Imagination Library, Payroll and Mileage for Staff, Imagination Library, Quill.com, Lakeshore Learning, Century Link, Crow's Stop and Shop, Katie's Korner, Kit Carson Mini Mart, Osborne's Supermarket, Cheyenne Wells Grocery, and Stop 'n' Shop Supermarket for the food program, School Specialty, Stop & Shop for rent and utilities, Cheyenne Wells School for diaper bank room rental, First National Bank of Omaha (multiple charges due to payments not being placed on the correct accounts), Bohall Neubauer & Co (for 990 filing), Donna Metcalf (provider appreciation venue), Gloria Newcomb (provider appreciation painting instruction and supplies), Leigha Henry (provider appreciation meal), United States Liability Insurance, Lora White reimbursement
- Monthly expenditures by funding source were as follows: BUELL $846.72 CCRR $975.17, CSQI $5,161.65, FHCN $1,677.33, GAE CO Shines $0, LCO/UPK $4,554.26, LCDHS $373.72, SB $4,903.66, totaling $18,492.51.
- The Deposit Detail Report showed 4 deposits: State (LCO)- $3,161.45, State (FCCHN, Systems Building, CCR&R, COShines)- $10,738.36, Weisbrod (Eads Hospital Donation for attending their trunk or treat), Discount School Supply (refund)- $655.92
- The Balance Sheet showed $148,976.82 for October and $130,118.85 for November.
- The Expenditure Spreadsheet showing funding left by source showed ECSB $35,883.98, CSQI $38,782.01, CCR&R $1,755.63, FCCH Nav. $15,868.62, Buell $19,010.38, LCDHS $-580.12 (Haley reported this was not calculated correctly and she will fix it), LCO $28,703.46, Child Care Task Force Funding $23,472.60, ECB $4,521.03 for a total funding left of $143,944.99

Lisa motioned to approve the financials as presented by Haley and Sharon seconded. The motion carried.

True North Health Benefits Bundle Enrollment- Julie Witt

- Julie shared we had learned some more about the True North Health Benefits Bundle options for our staff.
    - We can enroll or cancel at anytime

- All staff must enroll for us to be able to get the rate of $27.50/ month
- Benefits include:
  - 24/7 telehealth
  - Medical safety net
  - Mental health coverage
  - Wellness platform
  - Financial toolkit
- There are add on options for vision and dental that would need to be paid for separately by staff
- It was discussed and decided by the board and Haley that the easiest option would be for CKLECC to pay True North directly
- Lisa made motion to move forward with the True North Benefits Bundle for each staff member, Autumn Lorenson seconded and the motion passed.

2026 COLA Increase- Haley Leonard

- Haley shared that the Federal COLA rate increase will be 2.8% for 2026.
- The policy regarding COLA increases for staff was read aloud after its revision at the beginning of the year.
- Lisa suggested that a separate conversation might work best for the board to privately discuss raises and COLA increases.
- Autumn Lorenson asked Haley how it looks in the budget. Haley said she always budgets for COLA increase.
- Lisa requested a private board meeting to vote on COLA and raises. Heather and Autumn both agreed.
- Taking everyone's schedule into consideration it was decided to hold a special board meeting on December 10th at 9:00 A.M. to vote on staff raises and COLA increases.

Approval of 2026 Tax Filing- Julie Witt

- Julie reported that due to a short turnaround time Julie, Haley and Amber all looked over the 990 as it was prepared by Bohall Neubauer & Co and filed it before the deadline was past. The only change needed was to add Heather in place of Dennis.

- Julie will email out the electronic copy for official board approval at the special board meeting on Dec. 10th.

Kiowa County Mural Location Vote- Julie Witt

- Katie made a motion to move forward with the Harris building at Sheridan Lake pending finding a lift to be donated. Autumn Lorenson seconded and the motion carried.

Eastern Colorado Bank Spend Down- Julie Witt

- Amber shared that per our grant application the funds were to be used to increase childcare access and grow the childcare workforce.
- Autumn Lorenson made a motion to use the funding first on mailers to be sent to all 3 counties, then the purchasing of the app for CLLC, them FFN items and supplies. Katie seconded and the motion carried.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 5th @ 1:00 p.m.

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CKLECC Board Secretary Signature

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Date