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.

January 5th, 2026 / 1:03 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); Katie Zipperer (Limon Memorial Library): Terry Jaques (Lincoln County Commissioner); Candie Chamberlain (CKLECC FFN Program Coordinator)

Zoom: Lisa Thomas (About F.A.C.E.); Sharon Mauch (About F.A.C.E); TyAnn Connley (SafeCare); Amber Smelker (Parent/Treasurer); Kailey Meardon (About F.A.C.E.); Carole Spady (CKLECC Quality Improvement Coach); Robbin Schincke (Morgan Community College); Rosalind Smith (The Cornerstone Resource Center)

Absent Board Members and Staff: Kathleen Bither (Kiowa County DSS); Shannon Harrell (Centennial Mental Health); Autumn Pelton (Cheyenne County Communities that Care, Cheyenne County Public Health); Autumn Lorenson (Board Vice Chair, Center Director LCDC)

MEETING CALLED BY:

Heather Randolph (Board Chair, Baby Bear Hugs)

BOARD MEETING AGENDA.

December Meeting Minutes - Heather Randolph

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

LCO/UPK Updates - Julie Witt

- Julie reports that CDEC has requested all LCOs to complete a questionnaire for next year's Statement of Work due to likely budget cuts.
    - Our regional LCO group attempted to coordinate and respond in the same way to advocate for all rural LCOs collectively.
    - There was a general consensus with the regional group that was voiced to CDEC about the need for just one set of quality standards for providers and LCOs to work from.
- CDEC is requiring all programs to submit reconciliation requests. We did have a few programs that needed to submit a request due to them not noticing that some students did not get enrolled

properly. The state did reimburse some requests this time but likely won't in the future. Julie has reminded programs to be sure that families have completed the enrollment process entirely.

- CDEC will no longer be providing a monthly powerpoint with updates. This is what Julie has been using for the monthly update calls with our providers.
- An updated Family Application Guide has been released for the 2026-2027 school year.
- CDEC reports that there has been a record number of UPK enrollments for the 2025-2026 school year.
- Finally Julie reports that we should be hearing more about next fiscal year's state budget soon.

Coordinator Report- Julie Witt

- Julie reported that the spend down of the Eastern Colorado Bank Grant is complete. We created a mailer with information on CKLECC's programs and recent efforts to expand child care options in our communities. The mailer includes a QR code inviting recipients to share comments or ideas. It will be mailed to all mailing addresses in each of the three counties.
- Our new FFN mini-grants are in progress. Four FFN providers responded to our needs requests survey. All four are providers that are actively participating in our program offerings already.
    - All four providers will be receiving a food stipend, similar to our licensed providers. It will be a one time payment in January and then in three months we will reassess what funding we feel like we have available for future payments.
    - Two providers requested care items such as sleep mats with sheets, CPR and First Aid Kits, Life Vac masks, pack and plays, and multi-cultural dolls. Both providers will be required to sign an agreement to continue participating in CKLECC's FFN program.
- The CKLECC 2026 Early Childhood Advocacy Calendar has been completed and will be here for distribution soon. It features a page on Terri Miller and her 30+ years as a licensed home provider, Genoa-Hugo Preschool and their Level 4 Quality Shines Rating, and many of the programs and offerings from CKLECC
- Kayla Buchanan has applied for two grants for Country Living Learning Center.
    - The Minor Improvement Grant will be for a new front door, cabinets and resilient material for her new center.
    - She is also applying for the Quality Improvement Grant
- We are still looking for a trainer for the January 28th Professional Development night. We are looking to focus on speech and/or fine motor development trainers.
- We have been discussing the reported low numbers of Early Intervention screening. We are looking into forming a partnership with other organizations to maybe offer screenings on diaper bank days.
- We were informed that Karen with Share the Spirit Foundation will no longer be able to come to Limon for our LCDC shoe event. We will be looking to see if there is a way we can still do the event in coordination with Rosalind at the Cornerstone Resource Center.

- Lantern (that presented last month) has sent more information on partnering to be the hub for local resource sharing. Local updates on events and resources would be texted directly to recipients that sign up with Lantern. The updates would be specific to zip codes so families will only receive information relevant to them.
    - We will hopefully have a contract from Lantern to look over next month.

Quality Improvement Coach Report- Carole Spady

- Carole says it was slow since most programs were closed for break but she was able to help deliver Christmas books to all the programs.
- She also wanted to share the exciting news that Genoa-Hugo Preschool was informed that they were rated a Level 4 by Colorado Shines. That is a big accomplishment.

FFN Report- Candie Chamberlain

- Candie reports that we currently only have four FFN providers but they are very active, true FFN providers.
- Candie is getting some new Fun Totes read for distribution at Karval Preschool and Eads Preschool
- Reported openings are: Kit Carson= 4 Preschool openings and all licensed home providers are full.
- There are 39 active enrollments in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Child Care and Diaper Bank Updates- Lora White

- Lora reported that there are no new child care updates this month.
- The diaper bank had seven new families last month. We are making changes to the pick-up schedule. We will now offer two pick up days at each location. The 2nd Tuesday and Wednesday from 11:00-1:00 in Cheyenne Wells and the 3rd Monday and Tuesday from 10:00-3:00 in Limon.
- Lora asked council members to share any resources or information that they would like distributed at the diaper bank. We do have quite a few Spanish speaking families so resources in both languages are great.
- Haley shared that she will have baby food that was donated to distribute at the diaper bank next month.

Council Updates

- Haley reminded everyone that 2027 will be CKLECC's 10th anniversary as a non-profit organization.

December Special Board Meeting Minutes- Heather Randolph

- Robbin motioned to approve the December Special Board Meeting Minutes as presented and Terry seconded. The motion carried.

Financials/Expenditures/Checks for December- Haley Leonard

- Haley provided the Check Detail Report for November. Checks included – QuickBooks Payroll Service, Payroll and Mileage for Staff, Imagination Library, Country Living Learning Center (needs to be removed as it is a duplicate for the App Subscription Reimbursement to Kayla Buzzzard), Quill.com, Century Link, Crow's Stop and Shop, Kit Carson Mini Mart, Osborne's Supermarket, Cheyenne Wells Grocery, and Stop 'n' Shop Supermarket for the food program, Stop & Shop for rent and utilities, Cheyenne Wells School for diaper bank room rental, First National Bank of Omaha, Kayla Buzzzard (Corrected App Subscription Reimbursement), Lakeshore Learning, and First National Bank of Omaha again.
- Monthly expenditures by funding source were as follows: BUELL $1,402.54, CCRR $174.14, CSQI $3,791.20, ECB Grant $1,260.42, FHCN $1,260.42, GAE CO Shines $0, LCO/UPK $3,125.97, LCDHS $62.29, SB $3,750.61, totaling $17,544.29.
- The Deposit Detail Report showed four deposits: State (CCR&R)- $1,072.69, State (FCCHN, Systems Building, COShines)- $12.896.91, State (LCO)- $499.69, Colorado Gives (four individual donations)- $145.00
- The Balance Sheet showed $144,588.14 for November and $129,023.33 for December .
- The Expenditure Spreadsheet showing funding left by source showed ECSB $31,653, CSQI $34,484.64, CCR&R $1,483.97, FCCH Nav. $14,440.47, LCO $25,132.06, Buell $17,607.84, LCDHS $18,357.59, Child Care Task Force Funding $23,472.60, ECB $543.91 for a total funding left of $143,703.48.
- Lisa asked what our next spend down focus would be. Haley reported that Systems Building, CCR&R, CO Shines, LCO and FCCH Nav. funding would all be due to be spent by the end of June.
- Terry asked if we could put any of the funds in an interest bearing account. Julie said we could look into it.
- Haley reported that Lisa had mentioned in the online chat that the Child Find dates for Plainview and Eads are set to be 3/9/26 and 3/12/26 respectively.
- Julie mentioned that as previously reported other councils have used their funding to purchase their own hearing and vision screening equipment.
    - With UPK having screening requirements we could use LCO funding to purchase equipment as well.
    - Julie reported that the two pieces of equipment purchased by a neighboring council had cost $7,100 and $8,200 but she wasn't sure which was for vision and which was for hearing. They then contracted with a retired person who was qualified to run the equipment and do the screening for them.
    - They have hosted three wellness fairs each year- one in each county they serve.

- Lisa asked if this would be duplicating services. We need to check with BOCES, the schools and local health providers to see if these services are already being offered by someone else.
- Rosalind agreed with asking local health care providers and said she was willing to reach out and ask them, if provided a list of ones in the other counties.
- Heather wondered if we could partner with the Lions Club and Kayle Loutzenhieser to do screenings for the children three and under in Lincoln County as Kayle already does for school age children.
- Carole wondered if we could rent the equipment from Yuma County.

Katie motioned to approve the financials as presented by Haley with the one correction to remove the check for Country Living Learning Center and Lisa seconded. The motion carried.

Approval of 2026 Tax Filing- Julie Witt

- Julie asked if we needed to do a board approval on the 990 tax form filing. Terry voiced that he did not feel like a board vote was necessary since it is an administrative procedure. The rest of the board agreed.

Review Child Care Tuition Assistance Application- Julie Witt

- Julie shared that she had sent out the revised Child Care Tuition Assistance Application and guides for the Families and Providers for the board to review.
  - This change is a result of an FFN provider requesting tuition assistance for a family that is unable to find licensed care for their infant and toddler and therefore unable to access CCCAP assistance.
  - This family is using full time care at an FFN provider who is active and participating in CKLECC's programs.
  - If the FFN provider were to accept CCCAP their reimbursement rate would be $12 or less per child.
  - Lisa wondered what we might be opening up by offering assistance to those not using licensed child care.
  - Terry had to leave for another meeting but he said he was in favor of approving tuition assistance for this family.
  - Lisa asked if we had updated the FPL numbers for the eligibility guidelines. Lora and Julie reported that it had been done since sending out the documents for review.
  - Lisa asked if we had ever had anyone participate in the program previously. Julie shared that we had two families when the center in Hugo was open that had used the program for one time payments while they were temporarily ineligible for CCCAP.
  - Lisa requested we consider removing the part about back payments being made to families directly and only allowing payments for future care to be made to providers only.

- Lisa asked everyone to keep in mind that families also get child tax credits for this exact situation. She would be willing to visit with the family to explore all of the other resources available to them.
- Robbin agreed with Lisa's advice about getting the family connected with other resources and to not allow paying families directly.
- Katie asked if we needed to have a separate application or a list of items or tasks for the family to work on such as meeting for extra resources and applying for other assistance. Most agreed that we want the process to be simple but helpful.
- Julie said we will make the requested revisions and send it out for board review before having the family and provider apply and put it before the board for official approval.
- Lisa shared a PDF on the affordable family child care tax credit and GetAhead Colorado in the chat.

Lantern Contract- Julie Witt

- Julie stated that the contract has not been received yet so we will move this to the February agenda.

Review CKLECC Policy Handbook- Julie Witt

- Julie shared the sections of the handbook that the board had requested to review were on accruing PTO and Paid Holidays.
- Currently staff earn one hour of PTO for every 30 hours worked.
  - Amber shared that at the bank they earn 10 hours/ month for anyone working 30 hours/ week plus 4 additional sick hours.
  - Robbin stated that 30 hours worked seems kind of high for mostly part time employees. She thinks 2 hours of PTO for every 20 hours worked would make more sense. This would come out to about 8 hours of PTO per month.
  - Heather requested that we take the time to do more homework and come back to this next month.
  - Katie shared that the state rate for sick leave is one hour PTO for every 30 hours worked.
  - With no further discussion it was decided that the topic would be tabled until next month.
- The section on Paid Holidays will also be reviewed in February.
- Julie shared that she will be working to add a section to the handbook about True North Benefits for staff. That will also be available for review next month.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 2nd @ 1:00 p.m.

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CKLECC Board Secretary Signature

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Date