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.

February 2nd, 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); Terry Jaques (Lincoln County Commissioner); Candie Chamberlain (CKLECC FFN Program Coordinator); Lucy Hernandez (Baby Bear Hugs)

Zoom: 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); Rosalind Smith (The Cornerstone Resource Center); Katie Zipperer (Limon Memorial Library); Kathleen Bither (Kiowa County DSS); Autumn Pelton (Cheyenne County Communities that Care, Cheyenne County Public Health); Jane Tallman (Cheyenne County DHS)

Absent Board Members and Staff: Lisa Thomas (About F.A.C.E.); Robbin Schincke (Morgan Community College); Shannon Harrell (Centennial Mental Health); Autumn Lorenson (Board Vice Chair, Center Director LCDC)

MEETING CALLED BY:

Heather Randolph (Board Chair, Baby Bear Hugs)

BOARD MEETING AGENDA.

January Meeting Minutes - Heather Randolph

- Terry motioned to approve the minutes as presented and Sharon seconded. The motion carried.

LCO/UPK Updates - Julie Witt

- Julie reports that we are still waiting on next year's budget. We are expecting a cut in funds.
- There has been a recent change to the UPK structure where there will be no more regional coordinators. All LCO questions are to be submitted through the help desk to the operations team.
- There is now a big focus on the quality standards and the alignment with Colorado Shines.

- 3 year old payments are scheduled to be happening today.
- We have no new programs applying to be UPK providers next year. All of our previous programs have returned.
- Families that enroll now through March 31st will go through the matching process. The process will switch to direct enrollment on April 1st. This is what most of our families will do to enroll since most don't enroll until after April.

Coordinator Report- Julie Witt

- Julie reported that the CCDF funding freeze has consumed a lot of our time since the beginning of January.
    - The funding streams affected would be Quality Improvement (QI) and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) for all ECC's.
    - We were told to submit all invoices as soon as possible but have not received any reimbursements for January requests yet.
    - Julie wanted to note that the QI funding is what funds all of Carol's work for coaching and training.
    - We are waiting for more information on how things will look moving forward. The freeze is currently on hold for another week.
    - CCCAP would also be affected by this freeze. We only have 1 provider with a CCCAP agreement that has asked about the process.
    - It has been recommended that QI programs hold off on applying for funding until the freeze is figured out.
    - We expect to know more by the end of the week on the freeze.
- There is currently a bill being heard to consolidate LCO's and ECC's. There are only 2 LCO's that aren't ECC's statewide)
    - ECCLA feels that this could simplify things for rural councils.
- Julie received a call from Joe Kiely with Prop 15.
    - Terry asked if there are any bills introduced at any time that could impact us to let him know so he can show his support or disapproval as a commissioner.
- The grant from Eastern Colorado Bank was spent down with the set up of a 3 month food stipend for 4 FFN providers (which are already being used), 2 materials grants for child care supplies and 1 tuition assistance grant for a family. The materials grants have already been distributed and the tuition assistance will start this month.
- There was no professional development offered in January due to not being able to find a trainer. We plan to have one the 4th Wednesday of February as usual though.

- A survey was sent out to providers asking for input on which date in April works best for our annual Spring Training Day. So far most responses are showing that April 11th works best. Planning for that event is in progress.
- Kayla Buchanan has applied for a Minor Improvement Grant from CDEC to update CLLC's front door and cabinets in the toddler room. The grant is for $2,200.
- The mailer was sent out in December to over 4,000 mail boxes. We have received only 2 responses. One was a negative one from Kiowa County and the other was from an agency in northeast Colorado that would like to think about ways to partner.
- Julie was recently contacted by someone in Limon about ECE work in our area, we also have 1 in Hugo considering opening a large family home child care center in the fall, and an additional 2 people with ECE backgrounds have reached out.
    - We will try to host a local meeting with those interested in the ECE field to see how we can support them.
- We are looking for other events to attend or considering hosting events in the other counties to share our information and to see how we can support them.
- The Share the Spirit Shoe Events could still be a possibility in partnership with The Corner Stone Resource Center for both LCDC and Eads Preschool. We just need to confirm we can make it work with the funding.
- We will host a celebration for the Genoa-Hugo Preschool on Feb. 4th for their Level 4 Colorado Shines Rating.

Quality Improvement Coach Report- Carole Spady

- Carole reported that she has not been out doing a lot of coaching due to the funding freeze.
- Julie shared that we are also not pushing programs to submit any grant applications until we know more about the funding freeze.

FFN Report- Candie Chamberlain

- Candie reports that we currently only have 5 FFN providers, none of them have openings.
- Licensed home providers report no openings.
- One center reported 5 preschool openings and 2 openings for 1-2 year olds.
- Candie sent new Fun Totes to Eads Library and has 2 more to distribute.
- There are 36 active enrollments in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Cheyenne County

Child Care and Diaper Bank Updates- Lora White

- Lora reported that there is a listening session at Genoa-Hugo School District next week. Julie will attend.

- The diaper bank is going well. In January we renewed our annual membership. The fee was $750 and is based on the quantity and value of the items we distributed. The report for 2025 shows that we distributed 3,679 items with an estimated value of $13,718.79. We have also set up a new pick up location at the Karval School District.

Council Updates

- Julie reminded Rosalind that we would be getting her a list of providers in the area to check with about Early Intervention Referral processes.

Financials/Expenditures/Checks for January- Haley Leonard

- Haley provided the Check Detail Report for January. Checks included – QuickBooks Payroll Service, EFTPS for payroll liabilities, Colorado State Treasurer for payroll liabilities, Colorado Department of Revenue and Colorado FAMLI for payroll liabilities, Payroll and Mileage for Staff, Imagination Library, Quill.com, Kit Carson School (for QI reimbursement), 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, Lakeshore Learning, and Amanda Pottorff (tuition assistance scholarship).
- Monthly expenditures by funding source were as follows: BUELL $1,063.50, CCRR $316.22, CSQI $6,044.34, FHCN $1,383.37, GAE CO Shines $0, LCO/UPK $2,378.95, LCDHS $0, SB $3,065.90, totaling $14,252.28.
- The Deposit Detail Report showed four deposits: LCDHS- $373.72, State (CCR&R, FCCHN)- $1,578.01, State (Systems Building, COShines)- $8,275.99, LCDHS- $206.40
- The Balance Sheet showed $143,129.20 for December and $126,050.00 for January.
- The Expense Spreadsheet showing funding left by source reported ECSB $27,925.45, CSQI $27,476.75, CCR&R $1,118.72, FCCH Nav. $12,931.06, LCO $22,450.51, Buell $16,665.85, LCDHS $18,357.59, Child Care Task Force Funding $23,472.60 for a total funding left of $126,918.23.

Amber motioned to approve the financials as presented by Haley and Terry seconded. The motion carried.

Heather Randolph Board Term

- Heather confirmed that she is willing to continue serving on the CKLECC board as the board Chair. Terry motioned to approve Heather Randolph for another 2 year term and Amber Smelker seconded, the motion carried.

CCDF Funding Freeze- Julie Witt

- Julie shared that if the freeze does go into effect we do have an in-kind balance that we are currently only using for the TrueNorth Health Benefit Bundle, the food program stipends, and cell phone reimbursement. Haley and Julie feel that this fund could be used to pay for Carole's coaching hours if needed.

Lantern Contract- Julie Witt

- Julie shared the contract from Lantern that was sent out for board review prior to the meeting and asked for board input.
    - Heather sees a benefit for families to be receiving local updates.
    - Julie stated that the cost would be $2,000 annually and that we would be the hub for other community agencies to share their events and info off our account.
    - Heather asked if we had confirmed that there are not any other organizations in our community that are already paying for a membership.
    - Terry asked if it was possible to partner with another organization.
    - Heather suggested we wait until we are certain about the funding freeze outcome before entering into a contract since we can begin at any time throughout the year.

Review CKLECC Policy Handbook- Julie Witt

- Julie shared that we had added a section to the handbook for the TrueNorth Health Benefits Bundle for staff. The group reviewed it and Heather suggested we change the word "eligible" to the word "will" to show that all staff are required to sign up for the benefit bundle in order for CKLECC to be eligible.
- Julie moved on to the section about Paid Holidays.
    - Heather asked if we wanted to add or remove any holidays or if we wanted to add to the policy to allow employees that work less than 60 hours per month to receive 2 hours of pay on the approved holidays.
    - Terry did not feel that we should be paying staff that work less than 60 hours per month holiday pay.
    - Julie shared that she felt the list of holidays was good as it was currently written.
- Julie moved on to the section about Paid Time Off.
    - The board reviewed the policy and the previous discussion from last month's minutes.
    - Terry suggested that if we are treating PTO and Sick Time the same this policy might be a little light on accruing hours.

- It was suggested by Terry and Amber that the discussion is again tabled until next month so that missing board members who had prior suggestions could give input.

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

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CKLECC Board Secretary Signature

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Date