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.

March 2nd, 2026 / 1:01 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); Katie Zipperer (Limon Memorial Library);

Zoom: Sharon Mauch (About F.A.C.E); TyAnn Connley (SafeCare); Carole Spady (CKLECC Quality Improvement Coach); Rosalind Smith (The Cornerstone Resource Center); Kathleen Bither (Kiowa County DSS); Lisa Thomas (About F.A.C.E.); Robbin Schincke (Morgan Community College); Autumn Lorenson (Board Vice Chair, Center Director LCDC); Victoria Folkerts (Cheyenne and Lincoln County Early Intervention)

Absent Board Members and Staff: Amber Smelker (Parent/Treasurer); Kailey Meardon (About F.A.C.E.); Autumn Pelton (Cheyenne County Communities that Care, Cheyenne County Public Health); Shannon Harrell (Centennial Mental Health)

MEETING CALLED BY:

Heather Randolph (Board Chair, Baby Bear Hugs)

BOARD MEETING AGENDA.

February Meeting Minutes - Heather Randolph

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

LCO/UPK Updates - Julie Witt

- Julie reports that UPK applications should start coming in over the next few months from families in our region.
- The State LCO meeting at the end of February brought a few updates:
    - The State is still working to determine how the Statement of Work (SOW) will look this year
    - We are still expecting budget cuts for next fiscal year.
    - We still have not seen our budget or official SOW for next year.

- Senate Bill 19 is on our radar. It is requesting to combine LCO's and ECC's. We believe this is in the final stages of approval. The final change is that the 3 LCO's that do not currently already serve as ECC's are requesting a 3 year transition period to begin functioning as both.

Coordinator Report- Julie Witt

- Julie reported that the GHS Preschool celebration for the COShines Level 4 rating, held on February 4th, was a hit. We provided cupcakes, CKLECC t-shirts, and resource bags.
- GHS held a listening session about the lack of child care options in Hugo, Julie attended.
    - Conversation at the listening session centered around the GHS school looking into solutions to provide child care for their employees only, unless other community partners come forward.
    - The next day a school staff member resigned from the school with the intention of opening a large family home child care in the fall.
    - If this Large FHCC does open, the school may not need to do anything else on their own as this would create 12 child care spots in Hugo.
- Our annual shoe events with Share the Spirit Foundation are in the final planning stages:
    - LCDC will be Wednesday, March 25th
    - Eads Preschool will be Wednesday, April 22nd
    - We will distribute bags with our CKLECC t-shirts, a shoe tying book and copies of many resource flyers.
    - Any board/council members are welcome to share any resources through this event as well.
    - TyAnn asked if we would like for anyone to come set up a table. Julie shared that parents are not at these events, it is just the children and school staff so a table is not necessary. Any flyers can be added to the resource bags.
- The February Professional Development night went well:
    - Nebula Early Childhood Collaborative provided the training "Every Voice Matters: Supporting Communication for Children with Disabilities".
    - 9 providers plus 3 staff members were present. We had a mixture of center staff, home providers and FFN providers present.
    - Nebula will also provide one of our sessions of training for our Spring Training Day Event
- Our annual Spring Training Day event is scheduled for Saturday, April 25th.
    - Providers will receive 6 hours of professional development time for attending
    - We will have 4 presenters:
        - Julie Pennington with Elbert ECC- How to communicate with kids with speech delays
        - Karina Scott- Freedom Inside the Box- Screentime and Behavior
        - Nebula Early Childhood Collaborative- Mindfulness

        - Shannon Harrell- we have not finalized the topic yet
    - We surveyed all providers asking if another format or time would work better. We got no requests for a change so we left everything the same as last year.
- We have connected with East Central BOCES about child screening events in the area:
    - EC BOCES has been providing these screenings but they are typically only done in conjunction with preschool round up events.
    - We plan to help coordinate with and promote these events to the 0-3 year old age group.
    - We will be giving out resource bags at these events as well.
    - LCDC's event is April 24th and Eads and Hugo both have their events planned as well.
    - Lisa mentioned asking the Cornerstone Resource Center about dental screenings that they are already doing. She also mentioned that there was previously a local dentist that helped with these events in Cheyenne county.
    - Heather shared that she had visited with Monica Gonzalez previously and she felt that Peak Vista had a dentist that might want to provide screenings.
    - Haley thought Tori Vagher, a client at our diaper bank,might be able to help with some dental contacts in the Cheyenne Wells area
    - Julie stated that we will begin putting the dates and resource bags together
        - TyAnn and Vicki would like a list of the dates sent to them.
    - Another idea was to ask home providers to include Early Intervention information in their enrollment packets.
    - Lisa wondered if we can get more subscribers to our newsletter to share these events more easily.
- CKLECC's statement of work for CDEC will be in progress soon. A draft was sent to us just last week to review the new format
    - New items include a business continuity plan and a close out plan.
    - Our responses/suggestions to the draft are due by March 11th.
    - Our Quality Improvement Funds need to be spent down on materials this week.
    - Julie is not feeling too worried about the new format of the SOW since ECCLA is usually good about offering some guidance on new sections.

Quality Improvement Coach Report- Carole Spady

- Julie reported for Carole that there will be a lot of coaching hours spent getting programs to spend down their QI grant. We have 6 programs participating in QI coaching/funding.

FFN Report- Candie Chamberlain

- Candie reports that we currently only have 5 FFN providers, none of them have openings.
- There are two licensed home provider openings
- There are 2 center based care openings as well.
- There are 36 active enrollments in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Cheyenne County.

- Julie shared that we have 4 FFN providers participating in the Rural FFN Network. We have since found out that one provider is showing up as ineligible for the $950 grant since it shows her as a previous recipient of this grant through ECHO.
- Julie is uncertain what to do about the situation and is asking for guidance. She feels that we should probably notify them that 3 of the 4 providers participating have already received the $950 grant from ECHO and should be on the list as ineligible.

Child Care and Diaper Bank Updates- Lora White

- Lora reported that there are not currently any child care updates.
- The diaper bank is going well. In February we served 67 children and 44 families in Lincoln county and in Cheyenne county it was 13 children and 9 families.
- We held diaper back pick up on two consecutive days last month in both Cheyenne Wells and Lincoln county and it seemed to work well.

Council Updates

- Katie shared that her records show that there are 114 active families and 88 graduates for Imagination Library.

Financials/Expenditures/Checks for January- Haley Leonard

- Haley provided the Check Detail Report for February. Checks included – QuickBooks Payroll Service, EFTPS for payroll liabilities, Wallit (TrueNorth Benefits Bundle), Payroll and Mileage for Staff, Imagination Library, Nebula (Provider Training), 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, Share the Spirit Foundation (Shoe events)
- Monthly expenditures by funding source were as follows: BUELL $2,881.98, CCRR $107.51, CSQI $3,617.41, FHCN $1,765.27, GAE CO Shines $328.43, LCO/UPK $3,319.12, SB $4,569.23, totaling $16,588.95.
- The Deposit Detail Report showed three deposits: State (GAE)- $1,045.00, State (COShines)- $6,638.77, State (LCO, CCR&R, FCCHNav.)- $4,476.40
- The Balance Sheet showed $141,388.74 for January and $123.907.44 for February.
- The Expense Spreadsheet showing funding left by source reported ECSB $23,355.92, CSQI $23,859.34, CCR&R $1,011.21, FCCH Nav. $11,027.45, LCO $18,903.49, Buell $13,783.87, LCDHS $18,357.59, Child Care Task Force Funding $23,472.60 for a total funding left of $110,291.17.
- Lisa questioned what the plans were to spend down the funding by the end of the fiscal year and requested an estimate of planned expenses for the next meeting. Haley and Julie shared that

planned expenses are training day, the Kiowa mural, payroll and provider appreciation day. Haley will create an estimate of funding to spend down for the next board meeting.

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

Shoe Event Funds- Julie Witt

- Julie asked if we could approve more funding to go towards the shoe events since the funding freeze is on hold through May.
- With the increase in the price of shoes, Share the Spirit believes that $40/shoe is a good estimate.
- In this case we will need to approve an additional $760 to cover the additional costs of shoes.
- Terry motioned to approve the spending of an additional $760 for our Share the Spirit Shoe Events for 2026, Rosalind seconded and the motion carried

Lantern Contract- Julie Witt

- Julie reported that for this contract we are only obligated for 1 year at a time.
- She received current numbers from Lantern that right now we only have 25 families signed up for Lantern, in all 3 counties combined. We would need to promote the program to gain more subscribers.
- Julie feels that this could be a good use for spending down funds, even though the annual price is high it would be a new way to share information.
- Julie did send out a notice asking for community partners and did not receive any response.
- We would receive training on how to use the platform if we were to subscribe.
- Lisa commented that she is in favor of waiting until we are at the end of spending down to see where our funding is before committing.
- Katie said if we push for sign-ups now it would be good to see those numbers before we decide to sign up for an annual subscription.
- Heather shared that she feels we might get more interest when families know that they will be getting local updates.

Policy Handbook- Julie Witt

- Lisa requested to remove paragraph 3 or combine it with paragraph above since sick leave and PTO are being treated the same. She also wondered if paragraph 5 about COVID is necessary still.
    - Autumn shared that there is a state requirement about Public Health Emergency Policies so we need to look at that.
- Lisa asked if we need PTO for individuals working less than 20 hours per week

    - Autumn shared that the state requirement is 1 hour of PTO for every 30 hours worked cumulative
- Lisa asked if we could view the earned PTO as a rate and if that would be helpful for Haley when calculating it.
    - Haley stated that she does currently use a rate when entering earned PTO.
- Lisa stated that 1 hour of PTO for every 20 hours worked would be about 1 day per month for the 2 employees that work about more than 20 hours per week. She also thought we could look at increasing that rate after 10 years of employment or something similar.
- Autumn stated that the sick leave language in paragraph 3 is required but can be put into section 2 above.
- Lisa shared that she feels holiday pay should only be for staff working 60 hours or more per month. Terry had stated similar feelings at last month's meeting.
- Lisa motioned to change the PTO policy to state that the rate of PTO is 0.5 or 1 hour earned for every 20 hours worked. Terry seconded and the motion carried.
- Lisa suggested that there be a list of paid holiday days created annually to be approved at the one board meeting annually to account for holidays that fall on weekends and other odd holiday occurrences.

Interest Bearing Accounts- Julie Witt

- Julie shared that since it was brought up at a previous meeting she had done some checking and as a state and federally funded non-profit we are able to open an interest bearing account per CDEC. She has a fact sheet from CDEC and Amber at ECB has said they would have some account options for us if we wanted to look into that further.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 6th @ 1:00 p.m.

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CKLECC Board Secretary Signature

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Date