

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Office of Child Care Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Location: Department of Workforce Services
 720 South 200 East
 SLC, UT 84111
 Conference Room 100

The following link will take you to the power point which was shared throughout the meeting which may be helpful while reading through the minutes: <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/879239.html>

Link to the agenda:

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1144289.pdf>

Link to the audio recording:

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1146378.m4a>

Committee: Ben Trentleman, Heather Thomas, Cristina Barrera, Jamie Bitton for Jody Zabriskie, Crystal Knippers for Joyce Hasting, Kelly Noorda, Lori Cox, Rhonda Dossett, Kristen Schulz, Alex Wade, Johnny Anderson, Jennifer Floyd, Liliam Llanos, Julie Backlund

Excused/Absent: Jody Zabriskie, Joyce Hasting

Interested Parties and Guests: Camie Galt, Joe Edman, Megan Vlaming, Laura Thompson, Jared Lisonbee, Heather Valentine, JoEllen Robbins, Shannon Thoman-Black, Emily Dalton, Kathy Randle, Colic Crebs, Caressa King, Carolyn Ellsworth, Lauren Fredman, Alison May, KC Hutton, Wendy Byron, Michele Rice, Charlotte Tanner, Jeff Sorensen, Karrie Phillips, Emma Moench, K Adams, Kathleen Brown, Hillary Christensen, Amber Mabey, Carrie Stott, Nichole Gaffney, Heather Hughes

Agenda Item	Discussion
Welcome <u>Chair Announcements/Updates:</u> A. Ben Trentleman announced the new board member Cristina Barrera. She is the new USBE representative. <u>Approval of 8/5/2024 meeting minutes.</u> <u>Recommendations/Actions</u> A. Ben Trentleman called for a motion to approve the minutes. Simon Bolivar motioned. Lori Cox seconded. The motion was carried unanimously. Minutes approved.	Ben Trentleman welcomed the Committee and called for attendance. <u>Chair Announcements/Updates:</u> A. Ben Trentleman announced the new board member Cristina Barrera. She is the new USBE representative. <u>Approval of 8/5/2024 meeting minutes.</u> <u>Recommendations/Actions</u> A. Ben Trentleman called for a motion to approve the minutes. Simon Bolivar motioned. Lori Cox seconded. The motion was carried unanimously. Minutes approved.

<p>OCC Director's Update</p>	<p><u>OCC Staff Update - Heather Thomas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Heather Thomas announced Ambra Peterson has moved to the Housing and Community Development Division as a new Program Manager. B. Heather Thomas announced two of the Office of Child Care's managers will be leaving the Division. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Megan Vlaming announced that she accepted a position at the federal level of employment with the National Center for Afterschool and Summer Enrichment and will be leaving the Office of Child Care. Her last day will be August 16, 2024. b. Heather Valentine announced she will be leaving the Office of Child Care to move to Boston with her two kids. She has been accepted at Harvard University to pursue her Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Her last day will be August 15, 2024. C. Heather Thomas announced that the job postings for the vacant positions will be opened soon. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Megan's position as the Grant Program Manager is currently open and will be until July 22, 2024. b. Heather's position as the Professional Development, Policy, and Consumer Ed Website Program Manager will be posted today. <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. No Discussion <p><u>Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan - Heather Thomas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Summary of May 2024 Public Comments. (18 Comments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Subsidy Eligibility (18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 17/18 of the comments mentioned HB 461. This bill says that we may provide a childcare subsidy for full time childcare employees waiving income eligibility requirements. Heather will give a more detailed update on that in a future slide. OCC is continuing to seek federal policy guidance around it and information on what other States are doing in this area as well as monitor our available budget. b. Subsidy Allowable Activities (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. We're planning to post new admin rule around making assistant directors and directors in child care programs who don't have a financial interest in the program itself eligible for subsidy, as well as allowing families with a child with special needs to telework and have a provider provide care in the same location. That is a new eligibility piece that we are working on. We plan to send out an email to this group when the admin rules are posted for public comment for your review. ii. We're also having some exploratory discussions with those that work with foster care in the Department of Health and Human Services to gather data around foster families and different criteria that we might be able to use and explore possible future options. c. Subsidy Rates (2) d. Child Care Access Data (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. We're working on updating some of our access data in conjunction with the Child Care Solutions and Workforce Productivity Plan that is currently happening. e. Subsidy Application Requirements f. Subsidy Copays g. Subsidy Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The department's working on a department wide outreach campaign about our services in general. One of those focuses includes child care assistance. So we're looking forward to sharing more about that campaign as it launches. h. Grants/Contracts for Direct Services
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- i. We've requested policy guidance and information on what other States have implemented successfully from our federal partners, and we'll be talking about it more with our other States and federal partners at our State and Territories Administrators Meeting at the end of the month in DC. We're hoping to utilize the Childcare Solutions and Workforce Productivity Plan report around childcare access to also inform where we might focus our efforts.
- ii. We need to provide grants or contracts for infants and toddlers, in underserved geographic areas and for children with special needs. We've been working with the group that is creating that report to see if we can get more information around those areas to be able to make informed choices about where we might put those grants and contracts into place that are now required with our new federal regulations.
- i. CCQS Framework
 - i. We're working on a revision to our current framework.
- j. CCQS Enhanced Subsidy Grant Rates
- k. Workforce Wage/Benefit Initiatives
- l. Suspensions and Expulsions Policy
 - i. The Early Childhood Utah, Advisory Council, Social and Emotional Subcommittee is working on initiatives around this, and the Office of Child Care has representation on the committee for this.
- m. Plan Correction
 - i. We made corrections as needed to the plan.

Discussion

- A. Jaime Bitton asked who submitted public comment
 - a. Heather Thomas answered many of them were Family Childcare Providers. There was a mix of people who answered the survey.

CCDF State Plan - Heather Thomas

- A. To view additional update information provided during this section please go to the Power Point found at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/879239.html>.

Discussion

- A. No Discussion

Market Rate Study - Heather Thomas

- A. The Market Rate Study has been published on our [webpage](#).
 - a. The study is completed every 3 years. It involves surveying childcare providers around the rates they charge, and looks at the cost of providing care in order to inform the rates that DWS sets for childcare assistance.
- B. Child Care provider rates have gone up significantly since our last survey in 2021.
 - a. Rate increases will be effective October 1, 2024.
 - i. We will not be meeting the federally recommended threshold due to the amount of funding we currently have available.

Discussion

- A. Kristen Schulz asked what percentage of kids do we have funding for?
 - a. Heather Thomas informed her that she does not have the exact number with her but can look into it.
- B. Kristen Schulz stated that the federal government doesn't distribute enough money for all of the eligible kids to be covered. And so it seems that all the States are roughly in the same boat of not having enough federal funds to cover the families that may be eligible. I'm curious what else

the advisory committee members think about us not meeting the federal benchmark of 75%? Because of our concern that we don't have enough federal money. There isn't enough federal money, and yet the federal government is asking us to benchmark it. I'm curious what other people think about having our market rate show that rates are much higher and lowering the percentage of coverage in the subsidy program. Because I'm really concerned about this.

- a. Heather Thomas stated that she would love to hear everyone's thoughts. We talked about it a little bit last time. Our rates need to be less than what is recommended, we need to reduce our eligibility so less families are eligible, or we need to have a waiting list because we can't serve all of the children. So there are different options, and we're open to different options. At this point we went with not increasing them all the way up to what is recommended, but still increasing them significantly from our current rates. We increased already in January so that we could continue to serve the same families that we're serving now. These are difficult decisions, and we're definitely open to thoughts or feedback or suggestions on that.
- C. Simon Bolivar stated that's a very good question to have an answer for. This is not just child care. We've seen money from the feds being short or flat for many years and they keep asking us to do more with what we have. But if we're going to tell them okay, it's not enough. We need to have that type of answer to say, it is not enough, because we can only serve this percentage of kids with the money that we have received.
 - a. Heather Thomas informed the board that we're working on some headline performance measures that we'd like to share with this group. It's taking us a little time to develop what those would be and what data we are able to collect accurately. We would be looking at the percentage of eligible families, what percentage we're serving, and what percentage our budget can serve so that we can look at those 3 numbers together.
- D. Lori Cox asked if we have looked at what's coming down through Head Start? Because at the very best, we're looking at a 20% slot reduction through Head Start. I don't know if you guys have taken that into account, and how that would flood your subsidies if Head Start is eliminated all together.
 - a. Heather Thomas answered that they have not taken that into account, but when developing the budget, 5% growth was taken into consideration.

Public Comment

- A. Caressa King wants to know where we can send questions regarding the study?
 - a. Heather Thomas answered to please send the questions to occ@utah.gov.
- B. Katie stated that UAEYC is also also concerned about this and would be interested in discussing ideas on how it could be done differently.
 - a. Heather Thomas answered she is happy to set something up. Please email her directly or email occ@utah.gov to set something up.

HB 461 Update - Heather Thomas

- C. This bill states that OCC may offer a childcare subsidy to children of full time employees of childcare providers waiving income requirements in accordance with applicable federal law and regulation and subject to available federal funds.
 - a. There are no State funds attached to this bill.
 - b. We already offer childcare subsidies to employees of child care providers that meet our normal eligibility requirements and are included in our income eligibility.
 - c. This bill would expand that eligibility to those that are not currently income eligible.
 - d. If you think you have employees that would be eligible, please direct them to jobs.utah.gov to apply for childcare assistance.
- D. We are still waiting on policy guidance from our federal partners. We have had several conversations about it, and they're very aware that we're waiting on official guidance.
 - a. We're waiting for information on what other States are doing around this as well, and have asked for technical assistance from our federal partners.

- b. As mentioned before in the Market Rate Study update, we're unable to reach the federally recommended threshold for child care subsidy rates for those low income families that are currently eligible with our available funding, so that presents an issue related to funding for this bill.
- c. This bill does give us the opportunity to enact this program in the future. It would provide a great benefit to our early care and education workforce and to our providers. We're going to continue to look at it, look at our budget and receive policy guidance.

Discussion

- A. Kristen Schulz asked what DWS plans to do with this bill due to it being subject to federal funds and it stating shall, not may?
 - a. Heather Thomas informed the committee that the bill states we may provide those child care subsidies for that group. It's not a mandate within the bill. Then if we do choose to put those subsidies in place, they shall be subject to our federal regulations and subject to available federal funding. We do not have enough federal funding to get to where we would like to be with our currently eligible families. We don't have federal funds available to fund this additional eligibility. We're not going to do it at this time, but the bill does allow us to implement it when we do have that available federal funding. We definitely plan to consider it if/when we have enough funding to be able to put it into place.
- B. Kristen Schulz stated she would like to look at what the need is and look for additional sourcing for funding.
 - a. Heather Thomas informed the committee that OCC is open to looking into additional sources for funding.

Child Care Solution and Workforce Productivity Plan - Heather Thomas

- E. The Women in the Economy subcommittee of the Unified Economic Opportunity Commission was given a State appropriation to complete. It is actively being developed. They are gathering data and talking to all kinds of stakeholders currently.
 - a. The goal of this project is to understand how the state of child care will impact a child's quality of life. Families, businesses, and stakeholders in the state of Utah are brought together to have candid conversations around childcare. The main focus is to find innovative public and private ideas around childcare including best practices in other states, businesses and cities to inform policymakers and business leaders as they make decisions related to child care.
 - b. The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity contracted with the Early Learning Policy Group out of Virginia to complete this report. They've worked with many other States on childcare initiatives and are very knowledgeable of the childcare landscape. This report will provide us with new childcare access data that we can use within our State plan.
 - c. They are required to complete this plan by December 1, 2024 to publish publicly and report back to that subcommittee as well as the Legislature. Our office has been working with this group that has been contracted to do this extensively to provide data and contact information for relevant stakeholders. They are hosting focus groups with parents and providers this month to gather their perspectives on child care as well.
 - d. If you are interested in doing anything with this and you haven't been contacted, please let us know. I'm happy to connect you with that Early Learning Policy Group. You can email occ@utah.gov.
 - e. We're really excited to see the report and see those innovative ideas and solutions that may come out of it, and we'll be sure to share the report with this group. We are hoping to then utilize that data and information that comes out of that report to have some discussions here about our direction.

	<p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>A. No Discussion</p>
Partner Highlight	<p><u>Child Care Licensing - Simon Bolivar</u></p> <p>A. To view additional update information provided during this section please go to the Power Point found at https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/879239.html.</p> <p>B. Our division has 2 offices, the Office of Licensing and the Office of Background Processing, and under the Office of Licensing we have every facility that we license for child care, human services, including foster care and some other facilities like treatment. We also have health facilities, hospitals, and child care.</p> <p><u>Contract</u></p> <p>C. We work with the Department of Workforce Services doing contracts through the Department of Health and Human Services to run the health and safety issues or requirements from the CCDF as well as grants to do the health and safety pieces. Below are mandates that are completed through the Office of Licensing for the Child Care Development Block Grant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Licensing, Provider Inspections, and Complaints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. We license a variety of provider types. They are organized into 2 groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Home or residential providers. 2. commercial or center providers. ii. Within those 2 groups is a group of licensed providers who are also eligible to receive subsidies from the Office of Child Care, and we are also responsible to make sure that those providers meet the CCDF requirements to be eligible for funds. b. Databases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. We have a database, which is a requirement from the contract. It requires us to keep a database and keep the information of the licensing compliance history of every provider that the Office of Child Care gives money for. We have a robust database that they have been helping build for the past years, and it helps us accomplish the responsibilities of licensing, inspecting, and keeping information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. The server is where we keep all the information, but we also have an application. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The application works with providers by giving them a portal to facilitate the processes and also gives the licensors the ability to do everything through that application. We got rid of paper processes to expedite the processes. But that's a requirement of the contract, and we keep that piece as it is mandated. c. Technical Assistance to Child Care Providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. We are also required to provide technical assistance to childcare providers, and we do it in a variety of ways. ii. We actually report to the feds what type of technical assistance we provide, and they ask us for numbers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is very difficult to report numbers, because every time we visit a provider, every time we answer a phone call, every time we answer an email, all that is technical assistance. So accounting for the real number of episodes of technical assistance is very complex. 2. To satisfy the Fed's question, we put together a process in which providers have the opportunity to ask us for technical assistance. d. Interdepartmental Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. We also are required to have some interdepartmental communication, and this is done through our databases, which is also another piece down the contract.

We have a connection with the Department of Workforce Services system. It is real time so both agencies know what's going on.

- e. Interdepartmental Collaboration
 - i. We also have interdepartmental collaboration. Communication is one thing, because not only is it through our databases and through our applications, we also have meetings that we are required to be a part of, including this meeting.
- f. Background Checks
 - i. We also do a very important piece, which is the background check. The background check is a federal requirement, and we call it the comprehensive background check. We want to distinguish it from any other background checks that anyone gets because this is more comprehensive.
- g. CCDF Matching Funds
 - i. The Office of Child Care, through this contract, gets some matching funds for the budget of the Office of Child Care. It is approximately 1.5 million dollars. So almost half of what they give us, they get back.
- h. Programs and Providers Not Subject to Licensing requirements
 - i. We also have the requirement to make sure that providers are not required to be licensed.
 - 1. Our desire is not to license everyone, but to make sure that every child is cared for with the best quality possible wherever they are at. We want every child to have the same opportunities to receive the best care possible.
- i. Provider outreach
 - i. We also are required to provide some outreach, and this is in combination with the Office of Child Care. We collaborate with them as much as they need us to. We also collaborate with the state conferences that the Office of Child Care puts together.
- j. Collect and store required tax identification information
 - i. This is another requirement that the Office of Child Care wants us to do, and since we have a provider portal, it is simpler for us to collect. We collect and provide that information for tax purposes in case the IRS asks the Office of Child Care for an audit.
- k. Health and Safety Protocols
 - i. We organize the protocols or the rules depending on what it is, and make sure that the local Office of Child Care is in compliance with the federal Office of Child Care.
- l. CAC Website Database Access
 - i. We collaborate with the Care about Care agencies.
- m. Budget, audits, reviews
 - i. We have the responsibility to manage the money that they give us to make sure that we do the best and the most we can without money. We have audits, and the Office of Child Care is required to do at least one audit for the background check piece.
 - ii. We also do some internal audits in the Department of Health and Human Services, to make sure that we are in compliance with this contract. We also have reviews every year. We get a review from the Office of Child Care and a review from the Office of Licensing to make sure that every single requirement from the contract is being accomplished, or if there are any challenges or new money that we might need from the contract.

Discussion

- A. No Discussion

	<p><u>Highlights</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. All the highlights are all posted on the Office of Licensing's website. B. To view the highlights gone through for this section, please go to the Power Point found at https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/879239.html. <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Jamie Bitton asked if they are over sharing the documents we are required to post? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Simon Bolivar answered yes, we are overachievers. We are reporting all the data that is required and additional reporting. <p><u>Public Comment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Caressa asked a question regarding exempt centers who are not background checked by Child Care Licensing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Simon Bolivar answered that license exempt centers may go through another government agency to submit their background checks. Everyone that wants to receive subsidies or any grant money from the Office of Child Care has to go through our background check process, so any other background check process is not allowed by the Office of Child Care.
CCQS	<p><u>- JoEllen Robins</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. To view additional update information provided during this section please go to the Power Point found at https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/879239.html. B. The Coaching Application is open until July 16th. C. We are working on a framework revision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We are planning to have a draft and public meeting in September. b. The approved new framework is set to be done sometime in January. <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Jamie Bitton asked when the new framework will take effect? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. JoEllen Robbins answered it will take some time to take effect due to development. There is no set date at this time on when it will be rolled out. B. Lori Cox stated she would like to talk about incorporating Head Start in the high quality program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Simon Bolivar informed the committee fully licensing Head Start programs has been discussed previously, and Child Care Licensing is open to open it up for discussion again. Heather Thomas stated that Head Start's may participate if they are licensed. Heather Thomas and Simon Bolivar will touch base with Lori Cox separately. C. Holly Kingston stated that she hears a lot from providers that this program is intended for programs with subsidized children. The programs who do not have a subsidy often find the cost and time to receive a High Quality status isn't offset by the amount they receive. Many providers have found that they get more help from the federal government by not being in the High Quality program because then they get all the support to achieve it.
Professional Development and Consumer Education Update	<p><u>- Heather Valentine</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. To view additional update information provided during this section, please go to the Power Point found at https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/879239.html. B. Quorum eLearning Memberships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We have set funding aside for this and foresee us offering it for 18 months based on the pace of enrollment. <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Holly Kingston asked how long the Quorum eLearning Membership lasts? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Heather Valentine informed her it lasts 1 year.

Grants Update	<p><u>-Megan Vlaming</u></p> <p>A. To view additional update information provided during this section please go to the Power Point found at https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/879239.html.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>A. Simon Bolivar asked if there is a waiting list of eligible students that could not be served?</p> <p>a. Megan Vlaming answered yes, because there are some programs that have the space, and some programs don't. It really depends on the demographic area that's being served. We have some elementary programs, like our LEAs, that can only serve a certain number of kids per classroom with these numbers, and so they just don't have as many open slots that they would like to have because they have to spread it throughout their classrooms.</p> <p>b. Jared Lisonbee added most of the programs receiving Spanish student access funding have indicated that if there was additional funding available, they could double the number of eligible students that could be served. Senate Bill 220 has opened up the requirements with the number of students with economic disadvantages to having at least one risk factor. With the relaxing of the requirements for eligibility, it would be substantially higher than that if there was funding available.</p> <p>c. Emma Moench added that invoices for grantees share their actual number of eligible students. We know that there are many more eligible students that would benefit from this grant than what the funds actually cover.</p>
Stabilization Grant	<p><u>-Kathy Randle</u></p> <p>A. To view additional update information provided during this section, please go to the Power Point found at https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/879239.html.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>A. No Discussion</p>
Agency Updates	<p><u>USBE- Cristina Barrera</u></p> <p>A. To view additional update information provided during this section, please go to the Power Point found at https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/879239.html.</p> <p>B. Cristina Barrera thanked the committee for being part of it as the new USBE representative. She also provided a brief summary of her background.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>A. Jamie Bitton asked what the cost of the conference is?</p> <p>a. Cristina Barrera answered that the conference is free.</p>
Other Business & Public Comment	<p>A. Alison May asked if the last payment for the Stabilization Grant will be in September?</p> <p>a. Heather Thomas answered yes, we are looking to see if we have any of our extra funding for a smaller reduced payment in September 2024. We need to finish out our ARPA funding, which ends September 30, 2024.</p>
Adjournment	<p><u>Recommendations/Actions</u></p> <p>A. Ben Trentleman called for a motion to adjourn. Rhonda Dossett motioned. Simon Bolivar seconded. Motion was carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Upcoming Meeting:</u> Wednesday, September 11, 2024 ~ 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm</p>

