UTAH DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES CHILD CARE

Wednesday, May 14, 2025
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/files/1271193.pdf

Link to the agenda:

https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1270283.pdf

Link to the audio recording:

https://secure.utah.gov/pmn-admin/files/1277343.m4a

Committee: Ben Trentelman, Florencia Schapira, Jennifer Floyd, Johnny Anderson, Rhonda Dossett, Bree Murphy, Janet Johnston for Joyce Hasting, Alex Wade, Katie Ricord, Jody Zabriskie, Holly Kingston, Liliam Llanos, Shauna Tiatia, Joyce Hasting, Julie Backlund, Cristina Barrera, Anna Robbins-Ek

Excused/Absent: Kristen Schulz, Kelly Noorda

Interested Parties and Guests: Heather Thomas, Camie Galt, Ashley Trujillo, Jamie Foster, Ann Stockham Mejia, JoEllen Robbins, Samantha Mafua, Karrie Phillips, Joe Edman, Broc Huntsman, Brian Zabriskie, Crystal Knippers, Daphne Lynch, Carrie Stott, Nichole Gaffney, Hillary Christensen, Minerva Jimenez, Amber Mabey, Colin Crebs, Anna Lawrence, Amelia Mandela, Carolyn Ellsworth, Heidi Petersen, Jerica Casper, Charlotte Tanner, Jeff Sorensen, Leah Schilling, Lori Birrell, Lynne Burton, Jamie Allen, Megan Jolley, Wendy Byron, Victoria Ortega, Kathy Brown, Michele Rice, Allison Keller, Lauren Fredman, Paul Mueller, Keri Hamblin, Carolyn Christensen, Allison Sprague, Sara Jane Schenk, Betzy Mulwee, Shannon Thoman-Black

Agenda Item	Discussion	Recommendations/Actions
Welcome	A. Ben Trentelman welcomed the Committee and called for attendance. B. Committee Membership - Expiring Terms and Vacant Positions a. To view the terms expiring at the end of June and the currently vacant positions, go to page 3-4 of the PowerPoint. b. OCC will reach out for new appointment letters for represented agencies and organizations with expiring terms. c. To apply for all public seats please go to the Boards and Commissions website. *C.* Approval of 3/19/2025, Meeting Minutes	Ben Trentelman called for a motion to approve the 3/19/2025 minutes. Jennifer Floyd motioned. Rhonda Dossett seconded. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting minutes were approved.

OCC Director's Update	**<u>OCC Staff Update - Heather Thomas</u>** A. Heather Thomas announced that the administrative assistant Ashley Trujillo has accepted a position at the Department of Health and Human Services. Her last day will be June 6, 2025. Her position will be opening shortly on our website. ***<u>Discussion</u>*** A. No discussion. **<u>State Fiscal Year 2026 OCC Draft Budget</u>** A. Heather Thomas informed the committee that the Federal fiscal year 2024 (October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024), the Office of Child Care submitted its annual Quality Progress Report to federal partners in January. The report has been approved and is now available on the agency's website under the "plans and reports" section. B. Key positive outcomes of report: a. The report indicated a year-over-year increase in the number of educators achieving various career ladder levels. This increase spanned across all levels except career ladder level 12, which represents a doctorate. b. The Care About Childcare partners supported 148 educators in earning the CBA credential, more than double the 71 educators who achieved this the previous year. c. 37 licensed centers and 21 licensed family childcare programs participated in intensive coaching grants aimed at improving their quality ratings. Over the past year, a growing percentage of these programs have shown an increase in their observation points. d. We had several positive outcomes, and the Quality Progress Report is available for you to view on our website. Please refer to the report if you would like more details about our quality initiatives and what we submit for our federal reporting. ***<u>Discussion</u>*** A. No Discussion **<u>Child Care Advisory Committee Sunset Review</u>** A. Heather Thomas informed the committee about the committee's Sunset review, which occurs every 5 to 10 years for all advisory committees and boards to ensure their continued relevance. This was	

discussed a few months ago in the committee. An appeal date was set for the Child Care Advisory Committee, with its current term expiring July 1, 2026. Legislative interim committees review these sunset dates. It is anticipated that the Economic Development and Workforce Services Interim Committee will possibly address this on May 21st. Interested individuals can listen online or attend in person. The agenda for this meeting is not yet available on the provided link to the interim committee's webpage, but it is expected to be posted. During the meeting, a request will be made for the continued operation of the committee.

Discussion

A. Johnny Anderson asked if there is any fear that they are going to make an effort to sunset the committee?
    a. Heather Thomas informed the committee she does not think so, and the Office of Child Care will be presenting in favor of keeping the committee in place. There will be a small presentation from DWS on the purpose of the committee.

State Fiscal Year 2026 OCC Draft Budget

A. While still under review by the finance team and the executive director's office, and subject to ongoing partner negotiations and contract approvals, this draft version of the budget represents our most current estimate. The format is consistent with last year's presentation, outlining the FY25 budget alongside our proposed draft for the next fiscal year. As displayed, our anticipated budget, particularly for childcare subsidies, shows a significant increase due to sustained program growth. Items funded by COVID stimulus, such as last year's stabilization grant, have been removed. Generally, most budget areas remain similar to the previous year due to comparable funding levels and a lack of anticipated major funding increases. Fiscal team members Joe Edmund and Broc Huntsman are available for fiscal-related inquiries.
B. To view the anticipated budget please go here.

Discussion

A. No discussion

Partner Highlight	**<u>The Children's Center Utah - Samantha Mafua</u>** A. To view this update, go to page 6 of the Power Point. ***<u>Discussion</u>*** A. No discussion	
Agency Update	**<u>Licensing - Florencia Schapira and Daphne lynch</u>** A. To view this update, go to page 56 of the Power Point. ***<u>Discussion</u>*** A. No discussion	
CCQS	**<u>Updates and Comparative Data - JoEllen Robins</u>** A. To view this update, go to page 27 of the Power Point. B. There's a policy change regarding grant eligibility tied to subsidy overpayment. Programs with unresolved overpayments must address them to be eligible for a contract. We will be contacting programs individually about this. C. We're also considering a potential policy change regarding the enhanced subsidy grant. Currently, high-quality programs receiving a civil money penalty (CMP) due to a serious or extreme finding or a pattern of noncompliance are moved to "building quality" status, and their enhanced subsidy grant is discontinued. D. The proposed change is to adjust the rating to "building quality" but continue the enhanced subsidy grant until the end of that program year. This aims to ease the financial hardship on programs that have budgeted for these funds and allows them time to plan and potentially appeal the CMP. If the CMP is removed through the licensing appeal process, their previous status could be restored without the need for backdated payments. This change intends to provide more stability to programs. We welcome your feedback on this proposed policy. E. This change involves an administrative role and requires a public comment period, in collaboration with our legal team, before implementation. Therefore, it won't be immediate. However, we will begin working on this promptly and aim to finalize it as quickly as possible for future application. ***<u>Discussion</u>*** A. Holly Kingston asked if there is any consideration given to programs who may receive an inspection	

with a Civil Money Penalty assessed in November or December?
    a. JoEllen Robbins clarified that the discussion pertains to a program's recertification year, which varies for each program, as opposed to a standard calendar year.
B. Jody Zabriskie stated she agrees with the proposed policy change.

Revision - JoEllen Robins

A. To view this update, go to page 32 of the Power Point.
B. When the quality system was initially established, the Office of Childcare developed guiding principles. These original principles were reviewed and reaffirmed as the foundation for the current revision. Key considerations and goals include:
    a. Voluntary Participation: While all providers receiving CCDF funding must have a rating, participation in higher quality tiers is voluntary for licensed providers in good standing. They can maintain their license and regular subsidy payments without further participation. The decision to pursue higher ratings is left to the program based on various factors, such as the number of subsidy children enrolled.
    b. System Flexibility: The original step-based system, requiring programs to meet all criteria at one level before advancing, was revised due to feedback from community meetings with providers. The current system utilizes a hybrid point system, allowing programs to focus on areas they prioritize to earn points. While some areas have minimum point requirements, others have none, still allowing for the attainment of high quality. This increased flexibility is a significant improvement.
    c. Attainable Standards: Drawing on other states' models while acknowledging that quality standards vary, the goal was to create a challenging yet achievable system. Reaching high quality requires effort and time (estimated at 2-3 years on average), but it is attainable. Current data shows that almost 50% of participating programs have reached high quality.
    d. Consumer Friendly: The system needs to be easily understood by parents to help them make informed child care decisions.

	C. The revision process involved virtual meetings instead of in-person sessions. An initial survey gathered feedback from providers and partners on the existing framework. This feedback informed the development of a new draft framework, which was then presented at partner, family, and center meetings for further feedback. Ongoing input was also received from the Child Care Quality System Subcommittee. The current proposal reflects this iterative feedback process. D. A key proposed change is the reduction from five to four rating levels: a. Foundation of Quality: This replaces the current "default foundation of quality" and is for programs that choose not to engage further in the quality system. There will no longer be a default rating. b. Emerging Quality: Currently "foundation of quality," this level signifies programs meeting all licensing standards and engaging with the quality system but not yet meeting the minimum requirements for a "growing quality" rating. c. Growing Quality: Formerly "building quality," this level reflects programs implementing some quality practices and meeting a minimum point threshold. The name change aims to evoke a sense of progress. d. High Quality: This remains the highest level, indicating programs utilizing practices and providing evidence that assures parents of higher-than-average quality care. e. The "High Quality Plus" rating is being eliminated. Feedback indicated it caused undue stress for programs, was difficult to achieve (resulting in very few programs reaching it), and research suggested no significant difference in child outcomes between the two highest tiers. A simpler four-tier system is also considered less confusing for parents. E. The Health and Safety domain, linked to licensing compliance, is currently being held harmless due to recent changes in licensing monitoring processes. Previously, a minimum of 5 points (later adjusted to 10 to align with minimums) in licensing compliance was required, based on the number of non-rule compliance issues in the past year. As the licensing processes are still under review, the exact requirements for this component in the final framework are yet to be determined.	

	F. Endorsements and certifications remain in the framework, with minor updates. Programs can still earn points for various endorsements (e.g., Top Star, CACFP, Nature Explore, Eco Healthy), with the total points capped at 10. The change allows programs to receive points for each level of Top Star and CACFP achieved, and an additional point for Nature Explore or Eco Healthy. G. The Learning Environments and Relationships domain remains a significant source of points. No changes were made to ratios and group sizes for centers. However, revisions were implemented for family child care to provide more flexibility in earning points. The previous system often resulted in family child care programs receiving zero points in this area. The revised structure separates ratio and group size: maintaining a 1:6 ratio earns 6 points, and additional points (6) can be earned for specific ratios with children under two, exceeding licensing standards. Group size limits are 8 with one caregiver or 16 with two or more. These changes aim to make point attainment more accessible for family child care providers. H. Observation Component: No changes will be made for family childcare observations. We are anticipating implementing a significant change in centers due to staff turnover and training challenges. Previously, every classroom in a center needed to achieve a 3.67 as well as a 4 in interactions and language items. This "all or nothing" approach proved difficult for programs when only one classroom missed the mark, even if overall scores were good. To address this without lowering standards, the Office of Child Care analyzed data and found that using an average score of 4 across all classrooms, instead of the individual classroom minimums, would have allowed more programs to achieve a high-quality rating. This new approach will be implemented, but with the caveat that no classroom can score below a 3 (considered the licensing standard). Larger centers, which have more classrooms and therefore more observations, will also benefit from this averaging approach. I. SAPQA (School Age Tool): The minimum score requirement for the school-age tool, SAPQA, was initially proposed to increase to a 4. However, community feedback suggested averaging this score with others, similar to the change in the observation component, to avoid creating the same "all or nothing" problem. Data analysis supported this change, showing that high-quality programs	

	would still meet the criteria with averaging, with only one potential exception. J. Family Engagement: While the maximum points for family engagement will remain at 16, family childcare providers expressed that the current methods to achieve these points were not always suitable for their unique program structure. In response, the program reviewed best practices and incorporated more diverse options for earning these points, providing greater flexibility for programs in achieving these points. K. Inclusion of Children with Special Needs: Addressing feedback from families of children with special needs, the system will now include an opportunity for providers to gain certification related to working with this population. This certification, initially a COVID project through Utah State, will continue to be funded and will earn programs 10 points in the quality system. The certification will be valid for three years, consistent with other components. The maximum total points in this area is now 80. L. Leadership and Professional Development: Significant changes were made to the point structure for the primary director/caregiver's education. Feedback indicated that center directors felt the previous system undervalued their ongoing efforts to maintain certifications (like CDA) compared to individuals with degrees obtained long ago. Data showed that many high-quality centers had directors without bachelor's degrees. To address this perceived unfairness, the point gap between different education levels was narrowed. Points were increased for maintaining certifications/demonstrated competencies in both centers and family child care. A new option was added for family childcare providers only for a level 3-8 on the career ladder without a demonstrated competency to earn points, recognizing their achievement above licensing requirements. Points were also added for years of experience and ongoing training. A minimum of 18 points is now required in this component. Research continues to support awarding the most points for degrees. M. Education of Caregivers: Minimal feedback was received in this area, except the difficulty of maintaining required percentages of educated caregivers due to turnover. To address this, centers can now still earn some points if 15% of different staff members have achieved a level 4, providing more flexibility to account for staff changes. A	

	minimum of 15 points is required here for high quality. N. Management and Administration: Centers generally supported the inclusion of this domain, while family child care providers felt it was too burdensome. Research highlights the critical role of sound business practices in the sustainability of early childhood programs, especially for family child care, which has a high closure rate in the first year. Therefore, this component will remain in the framework but will be modified. The requirement of a bachelor's degree with 9 credit hours has been changed to a general college degree (Associate,Bachelor's or higher) with 6 credit hours in relevant fields. The Aim4Excellence credential will now be worth slightly more points than the college degree, recognizing its rigor. Points will also continue to be earned through the NAC credential and career ladder-approved training in business and leadership. This domain is not a mandatory requirement for achieving high quality. O. Accreditation: This component had the least support for remaining in the framework. While it is not a requirement for high-quality rating (only a few accredited programs currently exist), it will be retained. Programs that pursue accreditation will receive points for their efforts. The accreditation must be the "plus" version for NAEYC, and family childcare programs now have three accrediting bodies to choose from. Point values for accreditation have been aligned across center-based and family child care frameworks. P. Overall Points and High-Quality Threshold: Point values across the different components have been largely aligned between center-based and family child care, with the exception of professional development (as family childcare may not have caregivers). The grand total maximum points have increased for both centers (now 220, up from 200) and family child care (now 185 up from 162). The number of points required to achieve a high-quality rating has also increased for both centers (now 120, up from 110) and family childcare (now 100, up from 88). While the required points increased, the total available points increased at a similar percentage, maintaining a comparable benchmark for achieving high quality. Q. Timeline: The revised draft is being presented for feedback. Pending feedback, programming changes will move forward, with further consultation with licensing on one specific piece. An update on that piece is expected at the July meeting.	

	Communication about the new framework will begin, with implementation targeted for early 2026. R. The overall aim of these revisions is to create a more equitable, achievable, and data-informed quality rating system that addresses feedback from providers and incorporates best practices. ***<u>Discussion</u>*** A. Holly Kingston inquired whether a child care provider maintaining a 1:6 ratio with three caregivers qualifies for points if they have children under the age of two. She further asked if the provider loses the six points upon reaching a fifth child under two, regardless of the number of caregivers present. a. Karrie Phillips informed the committee that the current rule is based on age. A provider can care for up to four children under the age of two, regardless of the number of caregivers. However, group size points are still attainable if the one to six child-to-caregiver ratio is maintained. It might be necessary to clarify this by stating "with two or more" caregivers to avoid confusion.	
Professional Development and Consumer Education Update	**<u>- Jamie Foster</u>** A. To view this update, go to page 49 of the Power Point. ***<u>Discussion</u>*** A. No discussion	
Grants Update	**<u>- Heather Thomas (in place of Emma Moench)</u>** A. To view this update, go to page 51 of the Power Point. B. The Budget Review and Recommendation phase is underway for school readiness grants. The School Readiness Team, composed of the Utah State Board of Education Preschool Specialists and the Office of Child Care Program Specialists, is reviewing applications and scoring by external reviewers to make funding recommendations. Funding includes $6 million in state funds, $6 million from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF - federal), and an additional $2 million annually for the next three years of TANF funding appropriated by the legislature, totaling $14 million. A small portion of this will support existing Becoming High Quality grantees completing their grant cycles. New legislation mandates prioritizing High-Quality School Readiness Grants over Becoming High	

	Quality Grants. More information regarding the awards of these grants will be available soon. C. We are also integrating Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligibility requirements into the grant requirements, as these differ slightly from CCDF, to ensure grantees collect necessary data for allocating TANF funds to high-quality school readiness program slots. ***Discussion*** A. No discussion	
Agency Updates	**USBE- Cristina Barrera** A. To view this update, go to page 58 of the Power Point. ***Discussion*** A. No discussion	
Other Business	**No other business or public comment.**	
Adjournment	**Upcoming Meeting:** Wednesday, July 9, 2025 ~ 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Ben Trentelman called for a motion to adjourn. Rhonda Dossett motioned. Bree Murphy seconded. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned.