

**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 PowerPoint presentation shared throughout the meeting, which may be helpful while reading through the minutes: <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1376169.pdf>

Link to the agenda:

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1376167.pdf>

Link to the audio recording:

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1377543.mp3>

**Committee:** Joyce Hasting, Holly Kingston, Cristina Barrera, Jennifer Floyd, Jody Zabriskie, Johnny Anderson, Katie Ricord, Kelly Noorda, Kristen Schulz, Liliam Llanos, Alex Wade, Shauna Tiatia, Rhonda Dossett, Crystal Knippers (for Florencia Schapira de Grout), Bree Murphy, Marlin Taylor (for Ben Trentelman)

**Excused/Absent:** Ben Trentelman, Florencia Shapira De Grout & Anna Robbins-Ek

**Interested Parties and Guests:** Heather Thomas, Camie Galt, Kari Haugsoen, Jamie Foster, Ann Stockham Mejia, JoEllen Robbins, Emma Moench, Jared Mendenhall, Juone Kadiri, Lisa Roman, Leah Schilling, Jill Chesley-McGinnis, Hillary Christensen, Vanessa Lowe, Allison Sprague, Jerica Casper, Jamie Allen, Colin Crebs, Charlotte Tanner, Vanessa Lowe, Megan Jolley, Lori Birrell, Trina Valdez, Amie Andelin, Madeline Higginson, Rebecca Banner, Sunny Ledding, Collette Pulley, Jamie Galloway, Nichole Gaffney, Megan Jacobson, Kathleen Brown, Sarah Jane Schenk, Samantha Mafua and Allison Sprague.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Recommendations/ Actions
<b>Welcome</b>	<p>A. Joyce Hasting (Chair) welcomed the Committee and called for attendance.</p> <p>B. Committee Membership - Vacant Positions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Small business community representative (2)</li> <li>b. Corporate community representative (1) (Family-friendly workplace with efforts related to child care)</li> <li>c. To apply for all public seats, please go to the <a href="#">Board and Commissions</a>.</li> </ul> <p>C. Approval of 11/12/2025, Meeting Minutes</p> <p><b><u>Discussion</u></b></p> <p>A. Cristina Barrera sought clarification on the term “Corporate,” inquiring if nonprofits meet the requirements for the <i>corporate community</i></p>	<p>Joyce Hasting called for a motion to approve the 11/12/2025 minutes. Katie Ricord motioned. Holly Kingston seconded. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting minutes were approved.</p>

*representative* and how those requirements differ from the *small business community representative*.

- a. Heather Thomas explained that while “corporate” is the term used in our code, it could also be assumed to be “corporation.” OCC will ensure requirements are met as part of the review process once an application is received. Small business is not defined.
- B. Kristen Schutz confirms that a nonprofit is technically a corporation.
- C. Cristina Barrera remarked that the small business category would likely include LLCs (Limited Liability Companies).
- D. Cristina Barrera offered to post the vacant positions on the USBE Facebook page or share it from the Office of Child Care (OCC) page.
  - a. Heather Thomas noted OCC would have something posted to share and thanked Cristina for the suggestion.

DRAFT

**Office of Child Care  
(OCC) Director's  
Update**

To view these updates go to page 5 in the [PowerPoint](#)

**Staffing Updates - Heather Thomas**

- A. Heather Thomas announced that Juone Kadiri joined the team as the Head Start Collaboration Director on December 15. Additionally, the School Readiness Program Specialist position will soon be vacant, as Lauren Fredman has accepted a new position.

**Discussion**

- A. No discussion

**Federal Update - Heather Thomas**

- A. Addressing national media reports of alleged public assistance fraud in Minnesota, Heather confirmed that Utah childcare programs remain in compliance with state and federal requirements. Currently, there is no official information of a federal funding freeze in Utah and none is expected. If the situation changes, updates will be provided promptly.
  - a. Heather speaks to the integrity of the childcare programs that are funded by the Utah Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) and the oversight and coordinated efforts of the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Licensing;
    - i. The Office of Licensing approves regulated providers and performs announced and unannounced inspections to verify that facilities meet the standards required to maintain their certification.
    - ii. DWS childcare subsidies require multi-step verification for initial approval and periodic recertification for continued compliance. The Department requires licensed providers to keep detailed monthly attendance via an electronic tracking system, subject to periodic auditing or monitoring to ensure program compliance.
  - b. The State accepts referrals and tips from taxpayers, state employees, and anonymous sources on suspected fraud. Once submitted, they are investigated.
    - i. Health, safety, or licensing concerns regarding a childcare provider should be directed to the DHHS Division of Licensing and Background Checks (DLBC) <https://dlbc.utah.gov/submit-a-concern/>
    - ii. Suspected fraud involving families receiving childcare subsidies can be reported directly through the DWS website <https://jobs.utah.gov/departments/contact/fraud.html>
- B. On January 5th, updated CCDF notices were received which propose rescinding four components of the 2024 rule: the 7% family income cap for co-pays, the use of grants or contracts for direct services (child care assistance), enrollment-based payments, and prospective payments to providers. The 30-day public comment period concludes on February 4th. The department is currently reviewing the proposed changes to determine if an official comment will be submitted.

**Discussion**

- A. Katie Ricord asked Heather Thomas out of the four components that the CCDF is proposing to rescind, what are we currently doing.
  - a. Heather Thomas explained that the state currently caps co-pays at 7%, issues prospective payments to providers, and pays providers based on enrollment. Regarding grants or contracts for direct services, the state has a transitional waiver in place and has requested an additional two-year extension. Should the current rule remain unchanged, we are looking at August 1, 2028, to come into compliance.
- B. Kristen Schulz asked if there were any plans to change the three rules that we are complying with: the 7% cap, enrollment, and prospective payments.
  - a. Heather noted there are no plans to change these rules at this time, but any potential changes would be brought to the committee's attention.

**Budget Update - Heather Thomas**

- A. Heather explained that the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) allocation for Grant Year 2025 was reduced by approximately \$21.75 million, or 14–15%, compared to the previous year. This decrease is due to updated data within the formula, which weighs three factors: Utah's per capita income, the number of children under five, and participation in the free and reduced lunch program.
  - a. According to correspondence received from the Administration for Children and Families in December, Utah's funding is expected to stay at the lower 2025 levels for the 2026 grant year. The program is currently level-funded under a federal continuing resolution, and that resolution is set to expire at the end of the month.
  - b. The Office of Child Care will consult with partners regarding proposed budget reductions and review recent subsidy data for potential cuts. A proposal will be presented to the committee in March, followed by a new budget draft in May.

**Discussion**

- A. Jenifer Floyd asked if an amount of the budget required to be spent on the CCRA's (Child Care Referrals Services).
  - a. Heather broke down the spending requirements for the CCDF grant. She explained that at least 70% of funding must be allocated to direct services (child care subsidies). Additionally, at least 12% is mandated for quality initiatives: 9% for general quality initiatives (which includes CCR&R funding) and 3% for infant and toddler quality initiatives. No more than 5% must go toward administrative costs.
- B. Kristen Schulz requested an update on TANF funding, specifically inquiring if the requested amount was approximately \$15 million and whether that area would be subject to budget cuts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Camie Galt confirmed that the report has been finalized and submitted to finance. She noted that OCC has been advised not to rely on the TANF one-time reserve funding as ongoing funding is not a guarantee. Consequently, it is not being included in the current budget plan.</li> <li>b. Heather Thomas shared that a report for the previous quarter (October–December) identifying child care subsidy cases that meet the specific eligibility requirements for TANF funding was provided to the DWS finance team to draw down TANF funds.</li> </ul>	
<b>Partner Highlight</b>	<p>To view this presentation go to pages 6-11 in the <a href="#">PowerPoint</a>.  <b><u>Mountainland Child Care Resource Agency - Joyce Hasting</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Discussion</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Jennifer Floyd asked for more information on the Nature Explore Workshops. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Joyce explained that providers can meet the requirements and earn CCQS points through the Nature Explore program, which focuses on natural playgrounds featuring elements like dirt, sand, and wood. She shared that after attending the workshops herself, she found they offered simple, practical ways to create natural environments for children. To further champion year-round outdoor play—even in winter—her team distributed the book “A Thousand Hours of Outdoor Play” to local providers.</li> <li>b. Madeline Higginson asked if Nature Explore offers any grants.</li> <li>c. Joyce Hasting responded that she was not aware of any grant opportunities, but to reach out and she can provide more information or go to <a href="https://natureexplore.org/">https://natureexplore.org/</a>.</li> <li>d. Heather Thomas commented that Mountainland CCRA offers the Nature Explore courses for free to providers.</li> <li>e. Cristina Barrera mentioned a similar program, Every Kid Outdoors, and noted that additional information can be found in the USBE newsletter.</li> <li>f. Kristen Schulz publicly thanked Joyce Hasting, acknowledging the support Mountainland agency provides within Schulz’s region.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Child Care Quality System (CCQS)</b>	<p>To view these updates go to pages 14-18 in the <a href="#">PowerPoint</a>.  <b><u>JoEllen Robbins</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. JoEllen reviewed current CCQS data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One notable data point was the all-time high in center participation, which increased to 31%.</li> </ul> </li> <li>B. Renewals for coaching contracts are in the process, which involves a comprehensive review of each grantee’s scope of work and whether they have met the goals they have made within their quality improvement plans.</li> <li>C. The framework revision remains on schedule. Programs applying in March will be the first evaluated under the new framework in June, with the resulting ratings taking effect in July.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Discussion</u></b></p>	

	A. No Discussion	
<b>Engagement &amp; Development</b>	<p>To view this update, go to pages 19-20 in the <a href="#">PowerPoint</a>.  <b>- Jamie Foster</b></p> <p><u><b>Discussion</b></u>  A. No Discussion</p>	
<b>Grants Update</b>	<p>To view this update, go to page 22-23 in the <a href="#">PowerPoint</a>.  <b>- Emma Moench</b></p> <p><u><b>Discussion</b></u>  A. Joyce Hasting clarified a point in the presentation, noting that the January 13th deadline for Youth Mental Health First Aid Training has already passed.  a. Emma Moench noted that the website recently showed open spots and offered to recheck; she anticipates that the program will still allow registrations if space remains.</p>	
<b>Subsidy</b>	<p>To view this update, go to page 25 in the <a href="#">PowerPoint</a>.  <b>-Ann Stockham Mejia</b></p> <p>A. Ann announced that the Provider Guide is being updated to reflect attendance requirements as the ARISE contract concludes. Additionally, clarifications were added to address frequently asked questions. The department plans to make the updated guide available by April 1, 2026.</p> <p><u><b>Discussion</b></u>  A. No discussion</p>	
<b>Agency Updates</b>	<p>To view these updates, go to pages 27-34 in the <a href="#">PowerPoint</a>.  <b>USB - Cristina Barrera</b></p> <p><u><b>Discussion</b></u>  A. Cristina Barrera asked if the speaker notes at the bottom of the PowerPoint slides are visible on the Public Notice Website.  a. Heather Thomas clarified that because the slides are converted to PDF for the website, that additional content is not visible.  b. Emma Moench inquired about grant updates, specifically referencing the current funding hold on the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) programs and when it may be released.  c. Cristina Barrera advised checking the website for the current grant contract terms. Regarding future funding cycles, she noted that the information previously shared remains the most current from the federal government.</p>	
<b>Other Business</b>	<p><u><b>Holly Kingston -</b></u>  A. Holly Kingston has received several inquiries about childcare and Medicaid enrollment. Several applicants noted that upon receiving childcare approval, they were automatically prompted to apply for</p>	

	<p>Medicaid, and their childcare benefits would be jeopardized if the Medicaid application remained incomplete.</p> <p>a. Camie clarified that once applicants are approved for childcare, they are eligible for 12 months unless there are qualifying reasons for closure, such as moving out of state or exceeding the 85% income limit. Camie and Heather encourage these individuals to contact the department.</p> <p><b><u>Kristen Schulz - Tax Credit</u></b></p> <p>A. Kristen Schulz announced that effective January 1st, the federal employer-sponsored child care tax credit has been enhanced to 50% for small businesses (under ~\$31M revenue) and 40% for large businesses. A corresponding state bill has been released which would add a 30% state credit for small businesses and 10% for large businesses. This would bring the combined total credit to 80% for small employers and 50% for large employers. Kristen noted that while the intention is for the state and federal guidelines to match, the current language in the state bill does not yet perfectly mirror the federal version; she encouraged matching the state and federal tax credit language.</p>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	<p><b><u>Upcoming Meeting:</u></b></p> <p>Wednesday, March 11 ~ 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm</p>	<p>Joyce Hasting called for a motion to adjourn. Holly Kingston motioned. Kristen Schulz seconded. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned.</p>