

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/1402741.pdf>

Link to the agenda:

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1402739.pdf>

Link to the audio recording:

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1404027.m4a>

Committee: Joyce Hasting, Holly Kingston, Cristina Barrera, Jody Zabriskie, Brian Zabriskie (for Johnny Anderson), Katie Ricord, Kelly Noorda, Kristen Schulz, Liliam Llanos, Shauna Tiatia, Rhonda Dossett, Crystal Knippers (for Florencia Schapira de Grout), Angie Toone (for Ben Trentelman).

Excused/Absent: Ben Trentleman, Bree Murphy, Florencia Shapira, Johnny Anderson, Alex Wade, Anna Robbins-Ek and Jennifer Floyd.

Interested Parties and Guests: Heather Thomas, Camie Galt, Kari Haugsoen, Jamie Foster, Emma Moench, Ann Stockham Mejia, JoEllen Robbins, Ashley Trujillo, Colin Crebs, Juone Kadiri, Cheryl Saunders, Carolyn Lawson, Sara Jane Schenk, Leah Schilling, Karrie Phillips, Rebecca Banner, Carlene Hanson, Carrie Stott, Jerica Casper, Betzy Mulwee, Heidi Petersen, Broc Huntsman, Charlotte Tanner, Melea Rogers, Mary Kavanaugh, Victoria Ortega, Kathleen Brown, Allison Sprague, Valarie Browning, Chelsea Dalton, Joe Edman, Missy Sparks, Jill Chesley-McGinnis, Amber Mabey, Vanessa Lowe, Michele Rice, Joanne Albrecht, Jared Lisonbee, Jamie Galloway, Samantha Mafua, Megan Jacobson, Alison May, KinderCare, Rita, Madeline Higginson, Allison Keller and Ely Robles.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Recommendations/Actions
<p>Welcome</p>	<p>A. Joyce Hasting welcomed the Committee and called for attendance.</p> <p>B. Committee Membership - Vacant Positions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Small business community representative (2) b. Corporate community representative (1) (Family-friendly workplace with efforts related to child care) c. To apply for all public seats, please go to the Board and Commissions. <p>C. Approval of 1/14/2026, Meeting Minutes</p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>A. No discussion</p>	<p>Joyce Hasting called for a motion to approve the 1/14/2026 minutes. Jody Zabriskie motioned. Holly Kingston seconded. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting minutes were approved.</p>

<p>OCC Director's Update</p>	<p>To view this update, go to pages 5 in the PowerPoint.</p> <p><u>OCC Legislative Update - Heather Thomas</u></p> <p>A. Heather Thomas noted the conclusion of the Utah legislative session on March 6. She introduced several childcare-related bills that have passed both the House and the Senate, noting that they are now awaiting the Governor's signature to be fully enacted into law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. HB 190: Child Care Business Tax Credit which heavily expands the previous tax credits. While the old statute offered a 20% tax credit strictly for construction or rehabilitation costs, the new bill allows small businesses (under \$31M gross receipts in 2025) to claim a 30% state tax credit on general childcare expenditures, such as operating an on-site center or contracting with off-site/intermediary facilities. Larger businesses are eligible for a 10% state credit. These state credits stack directly with federal tax credits, offering up to 80% total combined coverage for small businesses and 50% for larger ones. To support employers in utilizing this, the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO) is developing a webpage featuring claiming instructions, eligibility examples, and federal integration details. b. HB 290: Child Tax Credit Amendment which modifies the existing non-refundable state tax credit of \$1,000 per child under six years old. The bill expands eligibility for families by raising the income thresholds at which the credit begins to phase out. Under this phase-out structure, the tax credit is reduced by 10 cents for every dollar a family earns above the new income limits. c. HB 379: Child Care Provider Food Preparation Amendment which exempts childcare food preparation kitchens from standard food service establishment regulations under specific circumstances. To replace those regulations, the bill mandates that the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) collaborate with childcare provider associations to establish tailored rules for food safety, sanitation, and the qualifications needed to receive these exemptions. d. HB 12: Sunset and Repeal Date Amendments which provided for an 	
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extension for the Child Care Advisory Committee was originally introduced as a standalone bill before being rolled into a larger bill at the end of the legislative session. The state boards and commissions have sunset dates to ensure they are regularly reviewed for continued necessity and purpose. SB 12 officially extends the Child Care Advisory Committee for an additional three years, moving its expiration date from July 1, 2026, to July 1, 2029.

- B. Heather spoke about the ending of the Education Savings Incentive program. It is administered by the Office of Child Care and provides eligible families with a state match in their My529 accounts. Due to very low participation, the Executive Appropriations Committee included the initiative in its list of reductions, meaning the program will no longer receive state funding after this year. OCC will still process the applications they recently received for the current year.

Discussion

- A. Kristen Schulz expanded on the HB 190 discussion, noting that for 2026, small employers—defined as those with \$32 million a year in gross receipts over the past 5 years—can receive a combined 80% tax credit. She also clarified that intermediary fees qualify, meaning businesses can claim either the 80% or 50% combined credit on those fees, depending on their size. Schulz mentioned that the Policy Project plans to launch an "early adopter cohort" to guide employers, emphasizing that the "real work begins now" with employer education to ensure the credits are utilized. She then highlighted two discrepancies between the state and federal tax credits. First, licensed home-based providers are ineligible for the state credit, though parents using home-based care can still go to their employers to access either a 50% or 40% federal credit. Second, employers are ineligible for the state credit if they obtain payment from an employee or deduct from an employee's wages for child care services; unfortunately, this effectively excludes childcare providers who offer employee discounts from claiming the state credit. Schulz ended with an invitation to anyone who wants to work with her to educate child care employers.
- B. Holly Kingston asks what the income amount increased to for the Child Tax Credit Amendments.

- a. Heather Thomas informed Holly that she did not have the specific amounts on hand, but noted that the limits vary depending on filing status and recommended searching for the bill online.
- C. Jody Zabriskie added more details to the HB 379 Amendments. Because child care programs are not restaurants, this bill aims to prevent facilities from being regulated as such. She explained that the goal was to reduce costs and create more uniform regulations that align across the state, rather than having rules from county to county. Examples of the new exemptions: facilities that do not serve raw meats can use residential-grade equipment, install a two-compartment sink instead of a three-compartment sink, and be exempt from needing an additional handwashing sink. She concluded by the importance of Child Care Providers being included in the rulemaking process.
 - a. Heather Thomas asked Crystal Knippers if her office was involved in the rulemaking.
 - i. Crystal clarified that while it falls under the Department of Health and Human Services, it is handled by the Environmental Health division rather than Licensing.
 - ii. Jody Zabriskie remarked that Crystal had been present and helpful at the meetings.

Budget Update - Heather Thomas

- A. Heather provided an update regarding the budget cut proposal addressing a roughly \$21 million reduction due to a decrease in Utah's annual discretionary funding allotment.

Since January, the OCC has gathered and reviewed stakeholder feedback, analyzed internal program data, and developed a draft proposal. The OCC's drafting process prioritized reducing underspent budgets, returning certain programs to pre-COVID funding levels, and protecting core quality supports.

The draft proposal is currently pending review by the finance team and the DWS Executive Director's office. Due to the complexity of these changes, the OCC proposed scheduling an Advisory Committee meeting in early April to discuss only this topic. This will allow the committee to thoroughly review the proposed cuts and provide feedback, ensuring a

	<p>finalized budget can be presented at the May meeting before the new fiscal year begins in July.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>A. No discussion</p>	
<p>Partner Highlight</p>	<p>To view this update, go to pages 6-12 in the PowerPoint. <u>Child Care Resource Agency - Metro -Carolyn Lawson</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>A. No discussion</p>	
<p>CCQS</p>	<p>To view this update, go to pages 15-20 in the PowerPoint. <u>- JoEllen Robins</u></p> <p>A. JoEllen reviewed current CCQS data.</p> <p>B. The Peer Learning Community (PLC) had a large increase, this is due in part to a massive outreach effort by Sonia Aguilera and the family child care specialists at the Child Care Resource Agencies, who contacted over 800 licensed providers.</p> <p>C. Due to the continuing growth of the Child Care Quality System (CCQS), two policies will start being implemented.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Programs achieving a High Quality rating for three consecutive years will transition to a biennial observation schedule; while annual observations were previously optional for these programs, they will now be mandatory every other year to free up capacity for new applicants. b. In the timeline for observations, it will no longer be a predictable three-month cycle from application to rating, high demand has necessitated moving some observation dates back by one month (e.g., from March to April). Programs will be notified by the end of their application month if it is being moved to a later date. <p>D. The OCC is re-evaluating the infant-toddler quality support grant (managed through URPD). Since the program has been running for over three years, many long-term participants have reached a</p>	

saturation point with equipment and materials. The office's policy change proposal is to limit the grant to a three-year duration per program, which would allow the funds to be redirected to new providers once a program's eligibility ends.

Discussion

- A. Holly Kingston asked if there were more positions available for family child care in the intensive coaching program?
 - a. JoEllen Robbins affirmed that more positions were available for family child care providers in the intensive coaching program compared to centers. Family providers often reach "High Quality" status at a faster rate because the coaching is focused on a single individual rather than multiple classrooms, which allows for more frequent turnover and availability. The next coaching application cycle will open in July, with an informational meeting scheduled for June; specific dates and times will be announced in May.
- B. Holly Kingston asked with the proposed modification to the infant-toddler grant, would the three-year limit be based on the lifetime of the program?
 - a. JoEllen Robbins clarified the proposal and how it would be a funding structure over a three-year period and over the lifetime of the program. Under this plan, programs would receive the full award amount in their first year, followed by 50% in the second year, and 25% of the original award in the third year.
- C. Holly Kingston inquired about the implications of the every-other-year observation schedule. She asked if programs would be ineligible for the High Quality Observation Award during the years they do not receive an observation.
 - a. JoEllen Robbins confirmed this was correct and noted that centers frequently opt out of observations to avoid unnecessary stress.
- D. Jody Zabriskie inquired about peak months for observations and requested an update on the current status.
 - a. JoEllen Robbins identified October, March, and April as peak observation months, with August, January, and February seeing the highest application volumes. She noted that scheduling remains unpredictable, as some programs may drop out, allowing room for

	<p>new programs. If a program's observation is delayed by one month, notification will be sent and rescheduling is currently placed on new programs that have not yet been observed.</p> <p>E. Missy Sparks suggested modifying the Infant-Toddler Grant to allow funds to be allocated toward training, rather than being restricted to materials, after the first two years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. JoEllen Robbins explained that the grant is currently structured to be administratively simple; shifting to a training-based model would likely require a reimbursement system (gathering and vetting individual receipts), which could create an unsustainable workload. She also noted that the grant already allows for flexibility, such as a 20–25% allocation for consumables (e.g., gloves and paper towels). A potential compromise: instead of individual reimbursements, the Office could potentially "pay up front" for professional development accounts, like Quorum Learning, which providers could then access as needed to reach higher quality levels. b. Heather Thomas added that the current focus on materials is strategically tied to program observations. She emphasized that the grant is designed to help programs improve their physical environments based on specific needs identified during their Child Care Quality System observations. By focusing on environment-related improvements, the funds directly assist programs in raising their observation scores and overall quality ratings. 	
<p>Engagement & Development</p>	<p>To view this update, go to pages 21-22 in the PowerPoint. <u>- Jamie Foster</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>A. No discussion</p>	

<p>Grants Update</p>	<p>To view this update, go to pages 24 in the PowerPoint. <u>-Emma Moench</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> A. No discussion</p>	
<p>Subsidy</p>	<p>To view this update, go to pages 26 in the PowerPoint. <u>-Ann Stockham Mejia</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> A. No discussion</p>	
<p>Agency Updates</p>	<p>To view this update, go to pages 29-47 in the PowerPoint. <u>Licensing - Crystal Knippers</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> A. No discussion</p> <p><u>USBE- Cristina Barrera</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> A. No discussion</p>	
<p>Other Business</p>	<p><u>No other business or public comment.</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> A. No discussion</p>	
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p><u>Additional Budget Meeting</u> April-TBA</p> <p><u>Upcoming Meeting:</u> Wednesday, May 13, 2026 ~ 1:00 pm -3:00 pm</p>	<p>Joyce Hasting called for a motion to adjourn. Holly Kingston motioned. Jody Zabriskie seconded. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned.</p>

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