Wednesday, May 13, 2026
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/1431789.pdf*

Link to the agenda:

https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1431381.pdf

Link to the audio recording:

https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1434152.m4a

Committee: Joyce Hasting, Jody Zabriskie, Katie Ricord, Liliam Llanos, Shauna Tiatia, Anna Robbins-Ek, Bree Murphy, Cristina Barrera, Holly Kingston, Jennifer Floyd, Johnny Anderson, Missy Sparks, Rhonda Dossett, Crystal Knippers (for Florencia Schapira De Grout), Angie Toone (for Ben Trentelman)

Excused/Absent: Florencia Schapira De Grout, Ben Trentelman, Kristen Schulz, Kelly Noorda and Alex Wade

Interested Parties and Guests: Heather Thomas, Camie Galt, Kari Haugsoen, Jamie Foster, Emma Moench, Ann Stockham Mejia, JoEllen Robbins, Monica Gailey, Allison Keller, Amanda Penrose, Amie Andelin, Annie, Broc Huntsman, Carlene Hanson, Charlotte Tanner, Clover Jean Owen, Elizabeth Kingston, Hamyanie Johnson, Heidi Petersen, Helena Taylor, Hillary Christensen, Ilya Oyzerskiy, Jamie Galloway, Jared Lisonbee, Jennifer Stout, Jill Chesley-McGinnis, Jeff Sorensen, Joe Edman, Kathleen Brown, Kathryn Larsen, Katrina Kennedy, Kelli Collins, Kelly Carlson, Kim Melville, Kylie Kennedy, Laura Kingston, Leah Schilling, Lisa McKenzie, Lisa Roman, Lori Birrell, Louise Earline, Mallory Adams, Mary Carlisle, Megan Mason, Megan Jacobson, Michele Rice, Miriam Finley, Nichole Gaffney, Rachel Miller, Samantha Mafua, Samantha Mason, Sara Jane Schenk, Sarah Kenningon, Staci Fuller, Susan Nelson, Vanessa Lowe, Dorthy Miller, Raquel Larsen, Mary Sinclair, Heidi Preator, daisyqeen26@gmail.com

Agenda Item	Discussion	Recommendations/Actions
Welcome	A. Joyce Hasting welcomed the Committee and called for attendance. B. New Member a. Missy Sparks was introduced as a new member of the Advisory Committee. She will be one of the two representatives for the small business community. C. Committee Membership - Vacant Positions a. Small business community representative (1)	Joyce Hasting called for a motion to approve the 4/15/2026 minutes. Johnny Anderson motioned. Rhonda Dossett seconded. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting minutes were approved.

	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. D. Approval of 4/15/2026, Meeting Minutes	
OCC Director's Update	**<u>OCC Staff Update - Heather Thomas</u>** To view this presentation go to pages 5-15 in the PowerPoint presentation. A. Heather Thomas provided an update on recent Office of Child Care (OCC) staffing changes, noting that some positions were consolidated due to a reduction in contracts and funding, including the end of the Education Savings Incentive. Specifically, Jamie Galloway has moved into the School Readiness Program Specialist position previously held by Lauren Fredman. Additionally, Kathy Brown has transitioned to the Engagement and Development Team, where she will continue to oversee developmental screening contracts while assuming Jamie's previous professional development responsibilities in a newly combined role. ***<u>Discussion</u>*** A. No discussion. **<u>Proposed Administrative Rule Changes (Posted May 15 for public comment) - Heather Thomas</u>** A. Heather Thomas reviewed the proposed administrative rule changes for the Child Care Assistance Program and the Child Care Quality System, which are scheduled to be posted for public comment with an anticipated effective date of July 1, 2026. a. The specific changes to the Child Care Assistance Program include: i. Families must report when their employment or approved activities end, which aligns with the updated policy allowing families to continue job searching for up to three months within their 12-month eligibility period. ii. The state will limit payment to one initial registration fee per child within a rolling 12-month period to reduce costs and encourage continuity of care, though exceptions will be made for specific	

circumstances such as child endangerment issues.

iii. Further clarification that licensed centers and family child care providers must retain electronic attendance records for three years, and failure to produce these records may result in the assumption that care was not provided.

b. The specific changes to the Child Care Assistance Program include:

i. High Quality programs that receive a High or Extreme citation, rather than a civil money penalty, will be reassigned to the new Growing Quality rating. Existing rules already allow these programs to retain their Enhanced Subsidy Grants for their full certification period regardless of this change.

ii. Mentions of the High Quality Plus rating will be removed to align with the changes to the Child Care Quality System framework simplifications going into effect July 1, 2026.

<u>Discussion</u>

A. Johnny Anderson asked for clarification on the Child Care Quality System, specifically questioning whether reassigning programs to the Growing Quality rating for a High or Extreme citation is in addition to civil money penalties. He also asked how a civil money penalty issued for a Moderate citation would impact a program's rating.

a. Heather Thomas clarified that the High or Extreme citation actually replaces the civil money penalty. She explained that under this updated framework, a program receiving a civil money penalty would no longer be automatically reassigned to the Growing Quality rating, adding that this change reflects committee discussions from several months ago and will officially take effect in July.

<u>State Single Audit - Heather Thomas</u>

A. Heather Thomas discussed the results of the department's state single audit, which ensures adherence to federal funding regulations. She shared that auditors identified an area for improvement regarding unresolved provider debts that were either significantly overdue or lacking current payment plans. To address this finding, she explained that the department is developing new strategies and updating its internal systems to pursue these overdue payments more proactively and ensure they are collected in a timely manner.

Discussion

A. Johnny Anderson asked how long an overpayment must be outstanding before it is considered overdue.
   a. Heather Thomas clarified that providers have 30 days after a debt is adjudicated to either pay the balance in full or become current on an approved payment plan.
   b. Jennifer Floyd asked if providers can continue receiving subsidy payments while holding an outstanding balance, and whether those debts are automatically deducted from their subsidies.
      i. Heather confirmed that providers currently still receive their regular subsidy payments. However, she noted that system updates are underway to allow for voluntary recoupment directly from future subsidy payments, alongside the potential to withhold payments entirely until debts are resolved.
   c. Johnny Anderson inquired about the impact on High Quality funds.
      i. Heather Thomas explained that the department already deducts overpayments directly from Enhanced Subsidy Grants. Additionally, providers with unresolved balances are ineligible to apply for other opportunities offered by the Office of Child Care, such as the Child Care Quality System Intensive Coaching Grants.

Overpayment Dashboard Updates - Heather Thomas

A. Ilya Oyzerskiy, the developer over the DWS Provider Portal, provided a brief overview of the upcoming online payment functionality on the Overpayment Dashboard. He explained that providers will soon be able to select specific debts, choose their desired payment amount, and batch multiple payments using a new shopping cart feature. The transactions will be processed securely through the state's standard GovPay system via credit card, with payments expected to post to the provider's account within 24 hours.

Discussion

A. Holly Kingston asked if providers will receive a transaction number at the end of the payment process to keep for their records.
    a. Ilya Oyzerskiy confirmed that they will, explaining that the GovPay system allows providers to enter an email address to receive a digital receipt alongside a transaction number. He also shared that developers plan to build an additional reporting feature within the portal, which will allow providers to easily pull a comprehensive history of all their past payments.

B. Missy Sparks asked how providers establish official payment plans to ensure they are meeting the required terms before making payments.
    a. Camie Galt explained that providers must arrange payment plans directly through the Department of Workforce Services Overpayment Collection team.
    b. Missy then asked if the provider portal could be updated to visually display these specific payment agreements, showing exactly how much a provider has agreed to pay toward each individual debt.
    c. Camie and Heather Thomas agreed this was an excellent suggestion for future functionality and noted they will look into it.

C. Missy Sparks inquired if providers could set up automatic, recurring payments to more easily fulfill their monthly obligations.
    a. Ilya Oyzerskiy clarified that the GovPay system does not currently support automatic recurring payments. However, he acknowledged that other state users have requested this feature and said he would elevate the suggestion to the developers again.

Attendance Record Requests - Heather Thomas

A. Heather Thomas introduced the next system update regarding attendance record requests within the provider portal. She reminded the committee that following the termination of the Arise Attendance System contract, the department has been relying on email to request attendance records for compliance audits. To streamline this process and address previous committee requests, the department is developing a new portal feature that allows providers to submit these required documents more efficiently.
   a. Ilya Oyzerskiy walked the committee through the proposed workflow for the new attendance audit feature. He explained that if a facility is selected for an audit, an Attendance Audit action item will appear on the portal's homepage under the Items to Complete section, as well as on the Children in Care (CHIC) screen. The system will list the specific facilities and children requiring attendance verification, seamlessly accommodating providers who manage multiple locations or large rosters. To submit the records, providers will use a pop-up upload window. Ilya noted that file sizes should be kept under 20 megabytes and that files must be in PDF format. He emphasized that providers must remove any passwords or encryption from their PDFs prior to uploading to ensure the files can be opened. Once uploaded, the documents will be automatically routed to the Office of Child Care for processing and verification.

<u>Discussion</u>

A. Holly Kingsotn asked if providers will receive an email alert when an attendance audit is assigned in the portal. She noted that many family child care providers do not check the portal daily and expressed concern that they might miss the requirement without an external notification.
   a. Ann Stockham Mejia agreed that a notification process is necessary. She explained that while the exact workflow is still being finalized, the department will likely pull a random sample list and email the selected providers directly in the interim.
   b. Heather Thomas added that the ultimate goal is to build an automated system directly into the portal.

Child Care Quality System Revision - Heather Thomas

A. Heather Thomas announced that the highly anticipated Child Care Quality System revisions will officially go live on July 1. On this date, all existing program ratings will transition to the newly established rating names. Additionally, any programs scored in June for a July 1 effective date—and all programs evaluated moving forward—will be assessed using the updated scoring frameworks. Heather provided the committee with links to these new frameworks for both licensed centers and family child care. She emphasized that the revised system is designed to offer providers greater flexibility and help mitigate ongoing recruitment and retention challenges within the industry.

Discussion

A. No discussion.

Budget- Heather Thomas

A. Heather Thomas presented the draft fiscal year 2027 budget, noting that the updated figures now incorporate various funding streams, including TANF, Head Start, and state funds. She explained that the planned budget reductions do not immediately total the target of $21 million because several changes will be phased in over time. To help offset costs during this phase-in period, the department will continue utilizing reserve funding from previous grant years alongside TANF reserves.
   a. Proposed subsidy policy changes for the Employment Support Child Care Assistance Program are still moving through the approval process and will be presented to the committee in full detail once finalized. With subsidy changes tentatively planned for the fall, Heather emphasized that future budget adjustments must account for two major factors: the program's historical 5% year-over-year growth and an upcoming mandatory market rate study next year, which is almost certain to reflect increased child care tuition costs.
   b. In light of upcoming cuts to the Child Care Assistance Program, the Office of Child Care would like to evaluate the broader mixed-delivery system comprehensively along with partners such as Head Start, the Utah State Board of Education, tribal child

care programs, and the Office of Early Childhood. Additionally, there are potential opportunities to engage with business chambers and employers to explore alternative, community-based child care solutions.

<u>Discussion</u>

A. Holly Kingston asked for insight into the upcoming subsidy changes, specifically inquiring if the department is still considering a return to pre-COVID income requirements. She also asked whether the upcoming adjustments would involve a single policy shift, such as changing income eligibility, or a combination of multiple changes.
    a. Heather Thomas responded that she could not provide specific details yet, as new potential options have recently emerged during the proposal process. However, she confirmed that the department is exploring multiple creative solutions rather than just focusing on income eligibility alone. Heather emphasized that she wants to wait until she has comprehensive data before presenting the full proposal, ensuring the committee has all the necessary information to thoroughly review the options and provide informed feedback.

B. Johnny Anderson asked how the committee will be able to review the proposed changes before they are implemented, noting that their next meeting is not until after July 1.
    a. Heather Thomas clarified that the subsidy changes will not take effect in July, but rather in the fall. When Holly Kingston asked for a more specific timeframe, Heather explained that while she could not commit to an exact date, policy adjustments—such as income table updates—typically occur in October to align with the federal fiscal year and the Division of Technology Services' schedule. Outlining the anticipated next steps, Heather stated she expects to present the finalized proposals at the July meeting. This could allow the committee to provide feedback at the September meeting as well before any changes are officially implemented.
        i. Joyce Hasting thanked Heather Thomas for her transparency, expressing appreciation that the

	department is waiting until the proposals are fully prepared before presenting them to the committee. C. Holly Kingston suggested creating a priority list to outline which programs or initiatives should be restored first if the budget improves and additional funding becomes available. a. Heather Thomas agreed this approach would be helpful and welcomed the committee's ongoing feedback to help determine those future funding priorities. b. Joyce Hasting noted that the committee should also establish a priority list for potential future budget cuts, ensuring there is a clear plan for what should be reduced first if the department ever faces similar financial constraints again. D. Johnny Anderson stated that the Utah Private Child Care Association (UPCCA) officially submitted public comments recommending that the department prioritize preserving Employment Support Child Care assistance over enhanced subsidy grants and other quality programming. He noted that many UPCCA board members, including himself, are willing to forgo some high-quality incentives if it means fewer families lose their basic child care assistance. a. Heather Thomas acknowledged this priority but explained that the department is trying to find a careful balance. While she recognizes the critical importance of basic child care assistance, federal regulations mandate that the state take quality into account to inform subsidy rates, which is currently achieved through the Enhanced Subsidy Grants. She cautioned against cutting quality funding so deeply that providers are no longer incentivized to participate in the Child Care Quality System. E. Jody Zabriskie supported Johnny Anderson's position, emphasizing that basic subsidies are the necessary foundation for the entire child care ecosystem. She stated that cutting basic subsidies hurts the industry overall because families cannot afford to access care, rendering the high-quality program ineffective if there are no low-income children enrolled to receive it. She formally proposed reducing the Enhanced Subsidy Grants,	

while the state is in a financial crisis, and increasing them later when funding improves.

- a. Jennifer Stout submitted an online comment expressing her agreement with Jody's position.

F. Holly Kingston asked if the department is federally mandated to pay for quality programs.

- a. Heather Thomas confirmed this requirement, clarifying that while the department could reduce Enhanced Subsidy Grant rates, the current rates do not even fully cover the true cost of providing high-quality care.
- b. Holly Kingston suggested establishing a formula that dictates how future funding increases or decreases are proportionately distributed across the budget, ensuring no single program bears the brunt of adjustments.
- c. Heather Thomas expressed openness to this idea.

G. Missy Sparks offered an alternative perspective, cautioning that while the UPCCA board consensus favored cutting quality grants, many individual programs rely heavily on those quality funds and would be deeply impacted by such cuts. She acknowledged the immense difficulty of the department's task, noting that no single budget reduction will satisfy every provider given their widely varied business models.

- a. Jody Zabriskie agreed with Missy Sparks's point, explaining the dichotomy between different business models. She noted that smaller programs with stable enrollment might prefer keeping high-quality funds intact, while larger centers currently struggling to fill spots desperately need robust basic subsidies to get families in the door. Ultimately, Jody reiterated her personal stance that funding the foundational level (basic subsidies) must come before funding quality initiatives.

H. Brian Zabriskie asked for clarification on the specific federal requirements regarding the budget percentages, particularly concerning the quality allocation.

- a. Heather Thomas explained that federal guidelines mandate a minimum 9% quality set-aside, a 3% allocation specifically for

	infant-toddler quality, and cap administrative expenses at less than 5%. She noted that the "Other" category covers non-direct program expenses, such as technology systems. b. DWS Financial Manager Joe Edman explained that the 70% subsidy requirement is split across two distinct funding streams. For the mandatory and match grants, 70% must be spent on subsidies, which includes the state's share of the match. For the discretionary grant, the 70% target is calculated only after deducting the required quality, infant-toddler, and administrative expenses. While the exact calculation varies by funding stream type, he noted that the department generally aims for an overall combined target of 70%. c. Heather Thomas added that the enhanced subsidy grant—which accounts for approximately 2.5% of the budget—is currently categorized under the quality allocation to help meet the infant-toddler requirement, though it could technically be classified under the subsidy category instead. I. Katie Ricord expressed concern that reducing funding for quality initiatives could send the wrong message to state policymakers, particularly amid ongoing discussions regarding deregulation in the child care field. She emphasized the importance of the Office of Child Care and the professional early learning community maintaining a strong, visible commitment to prioritizing and promoting quality. a. Speaking as a member of the public, Monica Gailey shared an alternative perspective based on her specific business model, noting that cuts to quality funding would be highly detrimental to her large, predominantly private-pay center. Because her program serves a lower percentage of subsidized families—which results in smaller reimbursements from both the food program and enhanced subsidy grants—she relies heavily on those direct quality funds to offset costs and maintain high standards. She highlighted that across the industry, diverse center demographics mean that budget adjustments will impact providers in very different ways.	

Partner Highlight	To view this update, go to pages 16-21 in the PowerPoint. **Utah Registry for Professional Development - Carrie Stott** ***Discussion*** A. Jody Hasting commended Carrie and her small, three-person team for their exceptional responsiveness and the massive volume of work they accomplish. a. Carrie Stott emphasized the scale of their efforts, noting that they successfully processed 19,000 accepted transcripts.	
Agency Updates	To view this update, go to pages 23-30 in the PowerPoint. **Licensing - Crystal Knippers** A. Heather Thomas provided additional information regarding new immunization requirements. Child care providers are now required to collect immunization records or exemptions for school-age children. This policy change stems from a federal noncompliance finding; Relying on Local Education Agencies (schools) to collect these records was insufficient, requiring the child care system to maintain its own documentation to return to compliance. ***Discussion*** A. No discussion **USBE- Cristina Barrera** A. ***Discussion*** A. No discussion	
Other Business	**No other business or public comment.** A. ***Discussion*** A. No discussion	
Adjournment	**Upcoming Meeting:** Wednesday, July 8, 2026 ~ 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Joyce Hasting called for a motion to adjourn. Johnny Anderson motioned. Holly Kingston seconded. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned.