



Program and Service Committee Minutes
Friday January 31, 2025
9:00 A.M.

Attendance

Meeting began at 9:00 A.M. Nancy Krause, Nancy Hopkins, Jess Petter, Wendy Sawyer, and Debra Schrader was in attendance. Wendy will be the reporter for the February 20, 2025 board meeting.

Thrive Iowa Update *(Information)*

Deb provided an update on the Thrive pilot project in Warren and Madison County. There is frustration from the contractors regarding continuous language changes in Qualtrics and communication regarding to times essential needs and housing was required to stop/pause in assisting families.

FY26 Preschool Tuition Policy *(Information)*

There are no changes to the FY26 preschool tuition policy other than the change in FPL levels that change every January.

FY26 Transportation Policy *(Action requested)*

There are two changes to the FY26 preschool transportation policy, raising the maximum reimbursement rate from \$10 to \$12 a day and changing miles from 5 miles to 8 miles a day.

FY24 2nd Quarter Report *(Information)*

The committee reviewed the second quarter reports from contractors. Below are a few of the highlights.

- Of the 26 reports that were due January 15, 2025 three reports were late.
- 41.2% of school ready funds have been expended and 37.5% of the early childhood funds have been expended; on target is 50%. It is noted that 20% carryover is allowed for local ECI boards.
- There is concern with Lutheran Services in Iowa who provides the New Parent Program, home visitation. The agency has had difficulty in replacing a full-time family support worker which has been vacant since March 2024. A letter will be sent to LSI requesting a detailed timeline that includes but limited to onboarding and training new staff.
- There are no major concerns with all the other contracts and most contractors are meeting or are close to meeting their benchmarks.
- Notes of interest include the following:
 - 100% of families served in the New Parent Program administered by Lutheran Services in Iowa, Parents as Teachers program administered by Southwestern Community College and the 96% of the Parents as Teachers program administered by Short Years Partnership met state enrollment criteria; additionally, all new families enrolled this year met the R Kids Board enrollment requirement of 80% or more.
 - Short Years Partnership Parents as Teachers Program has a waiting list as of December 2024.
 - Preschool tuition scholarships are down by 14 children compared to a year ago; preschool tuition scholarships are based on demand and its challenging to predict requests.
- A summary of the report will be provided to the February 20, 2025 board meeting.
- Copies of the 2nd Quarter progress reports are located at www.4rkids-eci.org.

Contract Amendment *(Action Requested)*

Due to Lutheran in Services in Iowa not replacing staff in the first half the fiscal year, it is recommended to reduce the home visitation contract by \$46,000.

Criteria for Family Support Programs *(Information)*

The committee had discussion regarding the 80% enrollment criteria for family support programs. After much discussion, the committee was pleased with the work of all 3 family support programs in achieving 80% families that meet state criteria and will not institute any further enrollment criteria for FY26.

FY26 Request for Renewal *(Information)*

FY26 was to be a year competitive grant process, however due to the uncertainty of changes for FY26 it will be a grant renewal process and will not be an open competition. A 6-month and 12-month budget along with service types and benchmarks will be asked of current contractors.

ECI Legislation and Changes *(Information)*

Deb provided an overview of the proposed changes to ECI. ECI areas will be no longer and counties will follow the same district map as Behavioral Health districts. Adair County will be in District 4 and Dallas, Madison, and Warren County will be in district 5. The

Governor is proposing to utilize \$11- \$16 million of current ECI funds to fund a continuum of care preschool project. Family support programs will be a priority, however there will be little to no funding for other projects. Information has been received that services provided by CCR&R that ECI areas fund and child care nurse consultant services will not be funded with ECI funding. As of today, the Governors bill has yet to be posted on the legislative website. To be as transparent as possible, Deb has a meeting scheduled with the 4 R Kids ECI contractors on Monday February 3, 2025 at 10:00 to inform them of the potential changes to ECI.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 10:00

Next meeting is face to face on Friday May 2, 2025 from 9:30-12:00 and will be by Zoom.