



**Early Childhood Iowa Area Board
Minutes
Thursday April 17, 2026
Virtual Meeting**

Board Meeting (Information)

Board Chairperson Martens convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Attendance (Information)

(x means attendance at the meeting)

Board member	Representation	Attendance
Catherine Reaman-Gerdes	Human Service	x
Christine Lundy	Education	x
Colleen Strohmaier	Business	x
Deb Hansen	Citizen	x
Jacob Gunn	Parent	
Jessica Petter	Health	x
Nancy Hopkins	Citizen	x
Nancy Krause	Citizen	x
Rita Martens - Chairperson	Citizen	x
Shelley Flanery	Citizen	
Wendy Sawyer	Faith	x

4 R Kids Staff Present (Information)

Debra Schrader, Executive Director.

Others present (Information)

Val Cameron, Jackie Giles, Ann Torbert (Dallas County ISU Extension), Amy Sue O’Conner (Crossroads Kids Preschool and Early Learning Center) and Kristie Vasey, (Orchard Place/Child Care Resource & Referral)

Distinction of Quorum (Information)

Board membership consists of no less than 8 members and no more than 12 members, with 11 positions filled at the beginning of the meeting; __ board members were present at the meeting representing quorum.

Open Forum (Information)

None

Introductions (Information)

Introductions were made by Board members and the audience.

Board Professional Development (Information)

Mr. Torbert, Ms. Cameron, and Ms. Giles from Dallas County ISU Extension provided a presentation about the Preschool Enrichment Project and the Quality Improvement Project.

Agenda (Action)

Board member Hansen moved to approve the April 17, 2025 agenda. Board member Board member Reaman-Gerdes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes (Action)

Board member Reaman-Gerdes moved to approve the February 20, 2025 minutes. Board member Krause seconded. Motion carried unanimously

Legislative Updates (Information)

Information was received April 17, 2025 from the Association for Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards and Advocates, that the advocacy has paid off and that the Governor has accepted the recommendation to change the start date for the new 7 district boards and the continuum of care for 4-year-olds to July 1, 2026. The bill is expected to be debated next week.

State ECI Board Action (Information)

The state ECI board acted regarding changing the funding formula for ECI boards and is effective July 1, 2025. Additionally, there will be three new funding categories, community planning/collaboration, home visitation and discretionary. The state ECI office has yet to provide written communication regarding the allocations, however a screen shot from the state board meeting was obtained. The 4 R Kids ECI area will have a 4.5% decrease in funding from FY25 to FY26 but this is considered draft. Large populated areas will have the biggest increases while rural areas will suffer the greatest and 24 of the 34 ECI boards to receive reductions, some ECI Boards will have as much as a 43% reduction.

Contractor Onsite Review Report (Information)

Director Schrader provided a detailed FY25 contract performance review report to the board. The onsite program onsite reviews took place in February and March 2025. The report included onsite monitoring, a review of each agencies fiscal audit, review of client files and client enrollment criteria as well as the effectiveness of the programs. There were no corrective action plans recommended for FY25 contracts. It was noted that Board member Sawyer attended an onsite review and the contractors were greatly appreciative of engagement.

Additional Funding Request (Action)

Board member Krause moved to approve a funding request of \$50,000.00 to Short Years Partnership for home visitation. Board member Petter seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

FY26 Funding (Information)

Due to the recent announcement of the change in legislation – although pending; Director Schrader will implement a simplified process for current contractors to apply for funding. It was noted that the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services will utilize other funding to support Child Care Resource & Referral programming and Child Care Nurse Consultants. The 4 R Kids ECI Board currently supports \$51,063 for Child Care Resource & Referral and \$89,014 for Child Care Nurse Consultants.

ECI Director Compensation and Review (Action)

The board had discussion regarding compensation for the executive director. Board member Hopkins moved to provide for an 8% raise for the executive director for the new fiscal year starting July 1, 2025. Board member Strohmaier seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Director Schrader thanked the board for the compensation package for the upcoming year.

Finance Committee (Action)

The Finance Committee members reviewed budgets, payment vouchers, bank statements, and fund balance reconciliations prior to the board meeting. Board member Hopkins moved to approve the February and March 2025 expenditures in the amount of \$115,659.95 and \$123,061.13, respectfully. Board member Lundy seconded. Motion carried unanimously. It was noted the rate of spending for FY25 was 61% of school ready funding, 68% of early childhood funding, and 32% of ARPA funding.

Board Program and Service Committee

The committee did not meet. The next meeting is May 2, 2025 at 9:30 and will be virtual.

Board Process Committee

The committee did not meet. Next meeting will be in August.

Administrative Update (Information)

Director Schrader disseminated an administrative update.

- Governor Reynolds announcement;
- Letters to legislators;
- State ECI board meeting outcomes;
- FY26 draft allocations;
- District board planning;
- 4th quarter payment;
- Preschool scholarship testimonials;
- Prevent child abuse grant;
- Thrive update;
- Onsite visits

- Success story
- Out of office;
- Early childhood committee updates;
- Professional development;
- Marketing and public awareness update.

Miscellaneous Board Updates (*Information*)

None

Next meeting (*Information*)

Board Chairperson Martens adjourned the meeting at 7:46 p.m. The next meeting is May 15, 2025 and will be virtual.