



**Early Childhood Iowa Area Board  
Minutes  
Thursday May 15, 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	x
Jessica Petter	Health	x
Nancy Hopkins	Citizen	x
Nancy Krause	Citizen	x
Rita Martens - Chairperson	Citizen	x
Shelley Flanery	Citizen	x
Wendy Sawyer	Faith	x

**4 R Kids Staff Present (Information)**

Debra Schrader, Executive Director.

**Others present (Information)**

Alyssa Barton, Elizabeth Crane (Lutheran Services in Iowa), Sheena Sullivan, Rachel Bardwell (Short Years Partnership, 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; 11 or 100% of board members 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)**

Representatives from Short Years Partnership providing Parents as Teachers and Lutheran Services in Iowa providing the New Parent Program provided presentations.

**Agenda (Action)**

Board member Reaman-Gerder moved to approve the May 15, 2025 agenda. Board member Board member Petter seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Minutes (Action)**

Board member Petter moved to approve the April 17, 2025 minutes. Board member Hansen seconded. Motion carried unanimously

**Legislative Update (Information)**

Information was shared regarding legislation; the session officially ended in overtime today May 15, 2025 around 6:30 A.M. The Iowa House did not debate the Governors Continuum of Care bill and is considered dead. The bill had changes to ECI including a plethora of other policy changes. There is no legislation to require local ECI boards to merge into the seven behavioral health district boundaries. The Association for

Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards and Advocates was instrumental in educating policy makers about the negative impact of the Governors bill. Additionally, sending letters of concern on behalf of the 4 R Kids ECI Board assisted in the outcome.

### **Potential Changes in ECI**

The state ECI office will be recommending many changes to service types and performance measures to the state board on June 6, 2025. If passed families will be required to apply for child care assistance and receive a denial letter for HHS to receive a preschool tuition scholarship. Other potential changes are in family support and a new manual has been drafted. Additionally, local ECI boards are being requested to utilize a state drafted contract template for services.

### **Conflict of Interest (Information)**

Annually the board reviews conflict of interest. Ten board members verbally stated they had no conflict of interest; board member Krause noted that she was a past employee of Lutheran Services in Iowa.

### **Finance Committee (Action)**

The Finance Committee members reviewed budgets, payment vouchers, bank statements, and fund balance reconciliations prior to the board meeting. Board member Flanery moved to approve the April 2025 expenditures in the amount of \$143,565.66. Board member Reaman-Gerdes seconded. Motion carried unanimously. It was noted the rate of spending for FY25 was 77% of school ready funding, 88% of early childhood funding, and 41% of ARPA funding.

### **Board Program and Service Committee**

The Committee met May 2, 2024 at 9:00 by Zoom. Board member Hopkins reported for the committee. Minutes and supporting documentation from the Program and Service Committee were provided.

### **3rd Quarter Report Review (Information)**

The committee met and reviewed the contractor's 3rd quarter progress reports and financial statements. The 3rd quarter progress report is available on the 4 R Kids ECI website. At this time there was no major concerns with the reports and majority of the programs are on track for benchmarks.

### **FY26 Funding Awards and Plan (Action)**

Due to many unknowns and volatility of action from Iowa legislature, a request for proposal process was not utilized. Current contractors were requested to submit benchmarks and budgets utilizing funding amounts they received as of July 1, 2024. These amounts were used to draft the FY26 funding plan. It is anticipated that the board will receive \$1,130,362.64 in state funding which is an 8% decrease from the previous year. There is an estimated carryover of \$75,725.02 from FY25 that was figured into the funding plan. Additional information was in the Program and Service committee minutes.

Board member Hopkins moved to approve the committee recommendations for the FY26 funding plan pending Early Childhood Iowa approval and the Department of Health and Human Services approval. Board member Petter seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The FY26 funding plan was approved as follows:

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Lutheran Services of Iowa	New Parent Program HFA – long term home visitation	\$176,031.00
Short Years Partnership	Parents as Teachers – long term home visitation	\$275,500.00
Southwestern Community College	Parents as Teachers – long term home visitation	\$114,711.27
Dallas County ISU Extension	Child Care Quality Improvement Project	\$97,584.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Child Care Mini Grants	\$15,900.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation	\$53,000.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Child Care Wage Enhancement	\$28,977.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Enrichment Coordination	\$93,464.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Tuition Scholarships	\$138,330.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Transportation	\$2,650.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Professional Development	\$5,512.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Dental Screenings	\$12,720.00
Central Iowa Juvenile Detention	Fiscal Agent/Record of Employer	\$11,000.00
Central Iowa Juvenile Detention	Board Expenses	\$15,000.00
Central Iowa Juvenile Detention	ECI Director Salary/Benefits	\$112,738.00
Central Iowa Juvenile Detention	ECI Director Expenses	\$17,300.00

A process will remain in place for contractors to request additional funds for FY26 in the event there are emerging needs.

**Board Process Committee**

The committee did not meet.

**Administrative Update** *(Information)*

Director Schrader disseminated an administrative update.

- Legislative update;
- Draft allocations;
- ECI contract boiler plate requirements;
- Multiple changes to family support;
- Prevent child abuse grant;
- Thrive Iowa update;
- Thrive update;
- Success story
- Early childhood committee updates;
- Professional development;
- Marketing and public awareness update.

**Miscellaneous Board Updates** *(Information)*

Board member Martens attended CRISP's open house in Winterset May 9, 2025.

Board member Hansen announced she will resign from the Board effective September 2025.

**Next meeting** *(Information)*

Board Chairperson Martens adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m. The next meeting is September 11, 2025 and will be virtual.