



**Early Childhood Iowa Area Board
Minutes
Thursday May 21, 2026
Virtual Meeting**

Board Meeting (Information)

Board Vice-Chairperson Westbrook 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	
Colleen Strohmaier	Business	
Jacob Gunn	Parent	x
Jessica Petter	Health	x
Nancy Krause	Citizen	x
Rita Martens - Chairperson	Citizen	
Shelley Flanery	Citizen	
Wendy Sawyer	Faith	x
Ricki Hall	Citizen	x
Jovanka Westbrook – Vice Chairperson	Citizen	x

4 R Kids Staff Present (Information)

Debra Schrader, Executive Director.

Others present (Information)

Alyssa Barton and Dawn Holt (Lutheran Services in Iowa), Jackie Giles and Michelle Sackvill (Dallas County ISU Extension). Page Humphrey (Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, and Sarah Downard (Warren County Public Health).

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; 7 or 64% of board members present at the meeting representing quorum.

Open Forum (Information)

Ms. Barton representing Lutheran Services in Iowa announced a new Director will be starting June 1, 2026.

Introductions (Information)

Introductions were made by Board members and the audience.

Board Professional Development (Information)

Representatives from Warren County Public Health (Ms. Downard) and the Iowa Department of Human Services (Page Humphrey) provided a presentation about Thrive Iowa.

Agenda (Action)

Board member Krause moved to approve the May 21, 2026 agenda. Board member Board member Hall seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes (Action)

Board member Petter moved to approve the April 16, 2026 minutes. Board member Reaman-Gerdes seconded. Motion carried unanimously

Legislative Update (Information)

Information was shared regarding legislation; the session officially ended in overtime on May 15, 2025. SF2488 passed that eliminates Decategorization, Community Partnerships for Protecting Children and Child Abuse Prevention funding and shifts the funding to HHS; provides for a study on Early Childhood Iowa with a report provided to the Iowa Legislature and the Governor by January 8, 2027, provides

for local ECI area boards to voluntarily give up management of home visitation programs; creates a new Early Childhood and Family Services system in HHS. Governor Reynolds has not signed the bill as of today.

ECI Director Transition *(Information)*

ECI Director Schrader has submitted her letter of retirement to the 4 R Kids Board. It is the intent for her be retired by December 31, 2026. A search committee was established of the following board members Reaman-Gerdes, Westbrook, Martens and Sawyer. Director Schrader will work with the record of employer, Central Iowa Juvenile Detention Center in regards to the transition process.

Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics *(Information)*

Annually the board reviews conflict of interest. No board members verbally stated they did not have conflict of interest. Board members were requested to complete the conflict of interest and code of ethics form online.

Finance Committee *(Action)*

The Finance Committee members reviewed budgets, payment vouchers, bank statements, and fund balance reconciliations prior to the board meeting. Board member Krause moved to approve the April 2026 expenditures in the amount of \$91,855.04. Board member Petter seconded. Motion carried unanimously. It was noted the rate of spending for FY26 was 70% of early childhood Iowa funding and 100% of ARPA funding.

Board Program and Service Committee

The Committee met May 1, 2026 at 9:30 by Zoom. Board member Westbrook 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.

FY27 Funding Awards and Plan *(Action)*

The board issued a request for proposal application for FY27 and it was a competitive bidding process. It is anticipated that the board will receive \$1,132,027.96 in state funding which is the same allocation amount from the previous year. There is an estimated carryover of \$132,000 from FY26 that was figured into the funding plan. Additional information was in the Program and Service committee minutes.

Board member Petter moved to approve the committee recommendations for the FY27 funding plan pending approval by the Department of Health and Human Services. Board member Reaman-Gerdes seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The FY27 funding plan was approved as follows:

Agency	Program	Amount
Lutheran Services of Iowa	New Parent Program HFA – long term home visitation	\$202,459.00
Short Years Partnership	Parents as Teachers – long term home visitation	\$315,000.00
Southwestern Community College	Parents as Teachers – long term home visitation	\$119,226.19
Dallas County ISU Extension	Child Care Quality Improvement Project	\$89,328.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Child Care Mini Grants	\$15,750.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation	\$52,500.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Literacy Project	\$25,200.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Enrichment Coordination	\$96,513.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Tuition Scholarships	\$134,400.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Transportation	\$2,625.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Professional Development	\$3,675.00
Dallas County ISU Extension	Preschool Dental Screenings	\$12,600.00
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	\$116,963.68
Central Iowa Juvenile Detention	ECI Director Expenses	\$17,300.00
Central Iowa Juvenile Detention	ECI Director Transition Plan	\$15,000.00

Other Notations

- All agencies with the exception of Short Years Partnership received full funding requests. Short Years Partnership received less funding than requested due to submitting the grant application late and having multiple budget errors.
- A process will remain in place for contractors to request additional funds after the FY26 books are closed.

- Lutheran Services in Iowa will remain on a corrective action during FY27 with bi-weekly updates.

Board Process Committee

The committee did not meet.

Administrative Update *(Information)*

Director Schrader disseminated an administrative update.

- Legislative update;
- SF2488;
- May 1, 2026 State ECI board outcome;
- Changes to fiscal fees, record of employer and audit fees;
- Changes in Iowa Grants;
- HHS mandated 16 policy and procedures for local ECI boards;
- I2D2 data;
- Recess makes difference;
- Success story
- Early childhood committee updates;
- Professional development;
- Marketing and public awareness update;
- Out of office dates.

Miscellaneous Board Updates *(Information)*

Next meeting *(Information)*

Board Vice-Chairperson Westbrook adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m. The next meeting is September 10, 2026 and will be virtual.