

Center Advisory Indiana Licensed Child Care Center Directors  
Advisory Board February 15, 2024  
Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Carol Johnson, Chairperson.

Voting members in attendance: Carol Johnson, Noel Hansen, Teri Dunham, Mike Garatoni, Taneya Harrison.

Guests:

Katya Drake (Hoosier Environmental Council):

Mackenzie Pelland (Director of ECE Observation Systems with the Council for Professional Development

Sam Sniderman (Vice President of Government Relations for United Way of Central Indiana) Patrick from Spark Learning Lab

Several staff members from the OECOSL

Katya Drake discussed the new *Healthy Spaces, Healthy Children* Program. She gave an overview of the program and answered questions from the group. She also requested if some members of the group would help in gathering information to help develop an environmental health recognition program for Licensed Center. She may reach out to some of the members individually.

Mackenzie Pelland discussed the CDA process and answered questions from the group.

Sam Sniderman gave an update on the 2024 Indiana Legislative Session and answered questions/concerns from the Board Members.

Patrick, from SPARK, reported that there were no new updates at this time.

Update from OECOSL:

Pam Roadruck reported there are 762 centers in the state. Also 76 proposed sites, out of 1,800 who applied for the expansion grants! Regarding the topic of 21-year-olds in infant rooms, we can submit a variance to the state to help with the lack of caregiver availability. In addition, a variance can be submitted for those applicants who are still 17 years old and in high school.

There are no current licensing positions open. Pam also asked to please complete the periodic Enrollment reports as they come out! The good news is that CPR is now accepted with the valid card dates! Although, Universal Precautions are still mandated as annual training. Someone mentioned the TEACH contract still shows CPR as annual. Updates need made.

Laura Sullivan reported she would send the slides out to everyone from the morning meeting on the CCDF changes. Noel Hanso brought up the fact that fingerprinting is tough in her area. Some of the vendors are wanting to drop services. Staff are needing to drive an hour to get prints. Pam said she can follow up with Lisa Ellis on it to see if any more information is available to help. Someone reported there is a link on the Identogo website to "host" a session on getting them done.

Laura went ahead and showed the slides from the morning meeting. A "late attendance" appeal form will be sent out by Carol Johnson.

- Reimbursement rate increases took effect on July 30th by geographical setting (rural, urban, or mixed settings)
- There will no longer be the 10% increase for OWM children.
- The eligibility increased for families from 127% to 150% of poverty level. This will increase approximately 11,000 more Hoosier children to be eligible. Families can apply starting August 1<sup>st</sup> thru Early Ed Connect.
- There is an Expanded Child Care Assistance Eligibility Toolkit on the OECOSL website.
- Those who once had a co-pay with the old rates will still have one EXCEPT those with \$1.00 co- pay.
- Market rates are evaluated every 3 years. (This is now a "cost model" vs. "market rate")

Indiana Licensed Child Care Center Directors Advisory Board  
Notes about the May and August, 2024 Meetings

The May meeting was cancelled due to another meeting being scheduled that involved some of the voting members and a large number of the OECOSL staff.

The August meeting was held but it was not an official meeting since a quorum of voting members were not present. Two new voting members were introduced: Courtney Beeman and Sara Krumme. Many of the members from 2023 have left their place of employment and are no longer members of the Advisory Board. The OECOSL did give an update to those that were present.

This year's legislative session is scheduled to begin during the week of January 6, 2025. Since it is a budget year, we expect the legislative session into the latter part of April, but it must conclude by April 29, 2025.

The early word we are hearing from legislative leaders is cautious. Anytime there is a change in governor, there is always some hesitancy from the legislature because there is uncertainty around what the new governor's priorities will be, how they will approach the budget process, and who will be staffing key entities. In addition to this uncertainty, we also are still dealing with the end of some of the pandemic-era federal dollars and worries about the continued growth of the state's Medicaid obligations. All told, we have been cautioned that opportunities for new spending will be pretty limited. There are also some rumors about potential cuts in certain agencies and programs.

By the time session begins, though, we should have some more insights into who the governor-elect will choose to staff key positions, and he will likely have made some statements around his budget and fiscal priorities. This will help set areas of focus for advocates and create opportunities for engagement by the field. There will likely be a need for more education of new staffers and legislators on the importance of child care to families and communities.

What are we hearing in terms of potential bill ideas or issues impacting the child care space? Here are a few:

- Within the budget bill, there may be some appetite to push for some modest spending increases for expanded eligibility for CCDF or OMWPK, or to expand award amounts. I think within the budget bill, we will also have to work with OECOSL on ensuring that the cost-based reimbursement rate can be maintained and strengthened with the end of ARP.
- There is some interest in both the House and Senate in continuing to explore the tri-share model, but what it looks like and how broadly it applies is still a pretty open question.
- Indiana has experimented a lot with education savings accounts in the K-12 space in recent years, and childcare may be another possible space for legislative use of ESAs to encourage tax-advantaged family savings for care.
- ELAC made some recommendations both within its recent report (The Hidden Cost of Low Pay) on early educator compensation and within its annual recommendations to the General Assembly (regarding licensure, PTQ, etc.). Some of those will likely find a legislative home.
- For folks who also work with or as providers for out-of-school time care, there is a lot of interest among that provider community in addressing some things with the SACC grant, licensing rules, and modernization of the state's "latch key" statutes.

All told, I think this session is going to be one where child care advocates need to play a lot of defense to protect the momentum we have seen over the last couple of sessions, with some opportunities for modest improvements in some programs. Events could certainly change the picture, including if we have better-than-expected revenue forecasts in December 2024 and April 2025 as the budget writing process finishes.

One last thing to keep on your radar: our Early Education Works Coalition and the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children are co-hosting a Child care Day at the Statehouse in 2025 on February 11. You can get more information and register here: <https://inaeyc.org/indiana-ece-day/>. We would love to see you there!