

Child Care Advisory Council Meeting
1/29/2025

Call to OrderAndrea Day

The Child Care Advisory Council meeting was duly called by Division of Child Care Director Andrea Day and held virtually via Zoom.

In Attendance

Lynn Baker, Chuck Bradley, Bill Buchanan, Andrea Day, Amy Hood, Tom Poland, Laura Tipton, Jennifer Washburn, Sandy Woodall

Meeting minutes from the previous CCAC meeting were approved.

DCC Updates Andrea Day

Federal Funding Freeze Update

Andrea Day addressed the issue of the recent federal funding freeze, noting that it had been a major concern in recent weeks. She stated that, based on information released in the media, the executive orders related to childcare funding had been rescinded for now. She emphasized that while this was positive news, they were still seeking clarification from the Office of Child Care. Andrea Day reassured the group that the mandatory Childcare and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds appeared to be unaffected at this time. However, she cautioned that the situation could change and promised to send out updates via the listserv once additional information became available.

Tom Poland asked if there had been any direct communication from the federal level confirming that Kentucky's childcare funding would remain secure. Andrea Day responded that while they had reached out for guidance, they had not yet received an official response. She assured everyone that they were actively monitoring the situation and would share any updates as soon as they were confirmed.

State Plan for 2025-2027

Andrea Day reported that the state plan had been approved with three key waivers. She explained that the first waiver related to prospective provider payments, as Kentucky was working toward transitioning from the current model—where providers are paid after services are rendered—to a system that allows for pre-payment, which would better align with private-pay practices.

The second waiver involved targeted grants and contracts for providers serving children with disabilities, children in underserved geographic areas, and infants and toddlers. Andrea Day noted that this would help ensure funding reaches providers who need it the most.

The third waiver focused on consumer education and transparency. Andrea Day acknowledged that while Kentucky had made progress in posting monitoring and inspection reports online, they still needed to improve how this information was communicated to families in a more accessible format.

Compliance & Federal Monitoring Visit

Andrea Day highlighted that Kentucky had resolved 13 areas of non-compliance since the last state plan review. However, she acknowledged that challenges remained, particularly in the areas of documentation and reporting structures.

She then announced that a federal monitoring visit was scheduled for late April through early May. This visit would be an opportunity to showcase the state's progress in child care oversight and compliance.

Tom Poland asked who would be involved in the monitoring visit. Andrea Day responded that representatives from the federal Office of Child Care would be conducting the visit and that they planned to highlight the collaborative work being done across agencies.

Brightwheel Childcare Management System

Andrea Day shared an update on the Brightwheel Childcare Management System, noting that 812 regulated childcare providers were now enrolled in the program. She announced that a new real-time reporting tool would launch in May 2025, allowing providers to update their available slots in real-time. This, she explained, would help families more easily identify childcare openings and reduce administrative burdens on providers.

Help Me Grow Developmental Screenings

Andrea Day reported that since transitioning the Help Me Grow developmental screening program to the Division of Child Care, the number of children being screened had increased by 26%. She attributed this success to strong partnerships with Child Care Aware and Learn the Signs Act Early.

Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership (ECAP) Program

Sandra Woodall asked how participation in the Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership (ECAP) program was progressing. Andrea Day responded that while 100 employers had enrolled, participation remained lower than expected. She explained that many employers were hesitant to join due to concerns over the administrative complexity of the program.

Andrea Day stated that the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and Child Care Aware had been working on an employer toolkit to simplify the process. She suggested forming a workgroup to explore ways to increase employer engagement. Sandra agreed and expressed interest in being part of the workgroup.

Federal Reserve Partnership Initiative

Tom Poland introduced a new initiative from the St. Louis Federal Reserve aimed at workforce development and child care funding. He explained that the Federal Reserve was particularly interested in addressing early childhood workforce shortages and financial barriers for families seeking care.

Tom outlined three key areas of focus:

1. **Rural Prosperity**, which would explore ways to support childcare businesses in rural Kentucky.
2. **Financial Inclusion**, which would provide funding opportunities for providers and families.
3. **Resilient Workforce & Childcare**, which would address childcare workforce shortages by partnering with employers.

Andrea Day suggested forming a task force to work directly with the Federal Reserve. Several attendees, including Sandra Woodall and Lynn Baker, expressed interest in participating.

GOEC Updates Lynn Baker

Lynn Baker provided an update on key initiatives, noting the approval of the strategic plan for 2025-2030 as part of the preschool development grant, which focuses on targeted messaging and integrating workforce development into committee work.

She highlighted the success of the November Early Childhood Institute, which had 600 participants and 20 volunteers, and expressed gratitude for their support. A second institute is tentatively planned for May, with a focus on allowing participants to pre-select sessions based on their needs.

Lynn Baker discussed the positive feedback received for the "Help Me Grow" developmental screening initiative, which aims to assist families and reduce costs. Twenty-seven out of 35 regional collaboratives attended the institute, with details on the May event and a call for session proposals to be shared soon.

Lynn Baker mentioned that committees and workgroups are being scheduled, and information on the alignment of joint standards and the career ladder will be provided soon. The Early Childhood Advisory Council will meet again on March 20 from 1:00 to 3:00, with the format to be announced later. Lynn Baker concluded by emphasizing the importance of partnerships with various organizations in achieving their goals and expressed appreciation for everyone's collaboration.

KDE Updates Bill Buchanan

The following updates were shared:

Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Project: The project will offer no-cost online education for preschoolers not enrolled in state-funded programs. Age of Learning has been selected to provide tablets and access to the My Reading Academy platform. School districts are encouraged to assist in identifying and enrolling eligible students.

All Stars Quality Rating Improvement System: This initiative is focusing on enhancing preschool quality by organizing districts into cohorts. Planned activities will include training and support throughout the year. Data will be uploaded into the grant management application (G MAP) by set deadlines, with All Stars ratings to be awarded the following summer.

Preschool Quality Partnership Grant: Recent sessions have focused on program quality and early literacy, with a session on family engagement scheduled for April 11.

Kentucky Pyramid Model: The state leadership team is transitioning from the Department of Education to the Governor's Office of Early Childhood to enhance support for social and emotional development in children and families.

Family Resources: A newsletter titled "Helping Children Learn" will be made available to families, featuring daily learning activities in both English and Spanish to support early learners.

FCCN Updates Amy Hood

Amy Hood provided an update on the Family Child Care Network, focusing on preparations for the third annual Family Child Care Network Conference scheduled for March 14 and 15 in Bowling Green, KY. Registration is progressing well, with 116 total attendees registered, including 95 providers, indicating strong interest in the event.

The conference was established during the network's first year, rotating locations among regional agencies. Amy Hood encouraged anyone interested in more information to reach out via email. The network continues to meet regularly and celebrate achievements, particularly marking one year of responsibility for the STARS program in family childcare homes. Efforts are underway to help providers start up and improve their star levels, with data reports expected to reflect these accomplishments in the coming month.

Amy Hood expressed gratitude for the collaboration with the Governor's Office of Early Childhood and DCC regarding the startup grants, which are now being distributed, generating excitement and activity within the network.

The FCCN team remains passionate about their work and held a full staff retreat in October, aiming to meet at least twice a year in person to strengthen connections and ensure consistent messaging. Amy Hood concluded by noting that the network is still in its early stages and continues to build effective systems.

Fire Marshall Chuck Bradley

Andrea Day inquired about updates from Chuck Bradley regarding staffing and inspections by the fire marshal's office. Chuck Bradley reported that the partnership with local fire departments is ongoing, allowing them to voluntarily conduct inspections of licensed facilities within their districts.

In terms of staffing, the situation has improved in the western region, where challenges in finding qualified candidates have been addressed. In the eastern region, while some retirements have occurred, efforts are being made to quickly fill those positions with good candidates.

Chuck Bradley noted that a new internal initiative has been launched to focus on inspecting all licensed facilities under CHFS. The goal is to complete inspections within the first three months for most areas, and within six months for more urban areas, to prevent any lapses in inspections necessary for renewals. Overall, he indicated that progress is being made smoothly.

KYOSA Stephanie Barker

Stephanie Barker provided updates on the Kentucky Out of School Alliance, noting that January has been a busy month. A new webpage titled "Out of School Time in Kentucky" was launched, aimed at highlighting the state's out-of-school time program landscape and providing data to decision-makers. The page includes interactive tools and maps detailing federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers and regulated school-age childcare programs. Stephanie Barker highlighted that, as of August 2024, there are 11 counties with no regulated school-age childcare, illustrating significant gaps in service, particularly in rural areas.

Stephanie Barker mentioned upcoming releases, including a fact sheet on state investments in after-school and summer learning, showcasing comparisons with neighboring states. In mid-February, the alliance plans to launch an on-demand learning pathway for school-age youth development credentials, developed with funding from the CNS Foundation. This initiative aims to help providers earn their credentials more easily.

Additionally, the date for the annual virtual conference, scheduled for November 12-13, to increase accessibility for participants unable to travel. She also discussed the need to update school-age program standards, which have not been revised since 2011, emphasizing alignment with the ongoing updates to Kentucky All Stars. The alliance will coordinate with the Division of Child Care on this process. Stephanie Barker concluded her report, thanking everyone for their support.

Adjourn

Andrea Day made a call to adjourn the Child Care Advisory Council meeting.