Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee

Committee Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2026
10:00am – 11:30pm EST

Indiana Government Center South,
402 W. Washington St.
Conference Room 4 & 5 – Wabash Hall

Live: Early Learning Advisory Committee Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams

In-Person Attendance: Sam Snideman, Adam Alson, Holly Brauneller, Sam Charron, Dr. Lee Ann Kwiatkowski, Ashleigh Moon, Rob Moorehead, Jennifer Myers, and Allie Sutherland.

Guest Speakers:
Camille Blunt; Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Lisa Mettler; OECOSL, Amanda DeRoss; FSSA, Tikila Welch; OECOSL and Justin Armstrong; AYS

I. Call to Order
   a. Sam Snideman called the meeting to order at 10:01am.

II. Approval of February minutes
   a. Sam S. made a motion to accept the minutes from the last meeting as presented. Adam A. also seconded. All in favor.

III. Public Comment
   a. Holly Maxwell – currently working as Academy Director of Lion Heart
      - Owned and operated Little Angels LLC - L3 PTQ
      - CCDF cuts have caused her to close her own childcare
      - Children are suffering as they are not in high-quality care due to many closing
      - Using FROG to fund vouchers is imperative so kids can get into high quality care as the youngest members of society
   b. Cory Kerns – Early Education Consultant
      - Agreed with previous comment
      - The number of centers closing has been discussed but not the declining number of seats
      - Children need funding and teachers do too to show they are valued
      - Boosting enrollment is an added benefit for caregivers who have had low enrollment

IV. Chair Report
   a. Paraphrased: "By way of Chair's report, I will offer a couple of comments in part in response to our public comment, but also in part to the broader issues. I know we will have some legislative update conversations from the OECOSL team, and we will have a rulemaking presentation from Amanda DeRoss from FSSA in a little bit.

This is a moment where there is a tremendous amount of pressure on the system. I think that folks are right to have and express the concerns that they have, not only for the providers in the community, but for the children and families that are served by our state system. And, you know, the team is working hard to develop a set of rules that will go out to public comment. The team is trying to work closely with state budget agency on the FROG funding issue and other financial pieces. But there is a tremendous amount of validity in what Holly and Corey and others in previous meetings have said. This is a moment where we do need a considerable amount of investment, not only in terms of dollars, but also in terms of the time and expertise and voices of the folks who are served by and through the system.
I am grateful to each and every person who comes here and makes that point. But I'd also lift, preempting Amanda a little bit, that as we approach the public comment period for rulemaking, as we approach the state budget committee's decision around the FROG funding that folks continue to be active and reaching out and participatory in those spaces too. Because your voices are more important now than they have probably ever been. So, with that, before we move on. Do members of the ELAC have any other thoughts they'd like to share before we get started?"
No additional comments from members.

V. Action Items

a. ELAC Bylaws – will be posted online
   - Sam motioned to approve the Bylaws, Rob seconded, no discussion, all in favor, no one opposed. Passed unanimously.

b. Vice Chair Election – historically ELAC has not had a vice chair.
   - Allie Sutherland has agreed to serve as vice chair
   - Sam Charron seconded, all in favor, no one opposed. Passed unanimously.

VI. Discussion Agenda

a. OECOSL Updates
   - Update to SEA 4: Adam Alson, Director of OECOSL
     - Currently, there is $300M in the **F**inancial **R**esponsibility and **O**pportunity **G**rowth (**FROG)** fund for an appropriation to Dept. of Corrections, Dept. of Child Services and Medicaid
     - In the 2026 legislative session SEA 4 was passed which allowed OECOSL to be another potential recipient of those funds for CCDF vouchers, and it also allowed for the fund to be augmented with additional funding.
     - Q: From the alignment with FSSA, was it the priority?
       - A: Yes
     - Q: When funds are moved from FROG to CCDF, is it assumed that spots would open?
       - A: Yes, when the funding is available.
     - Q: Is there any sort of timeline as to when additional funding will be available for CCDF? (Rob)
       - A: It is dependent on State Budget Committee approval.
     - C: Please convey to the Secretary that the timeliness of decisions and communication is appreciated.
     - State Budget Committee Website:

- HEA 1177: Camille Blunt, Indiana Chamber of Commerce
  - Passed legislation in 2026 session
  - Driven by workforce challenges in the child care space – expands employer tax credits and employer investment
  - Expands qualifying capital investments and subsidizes employee child care costs to reserve slots for employees participating in shared cost models
  - Eligible employers may claim a tax credit up to 50% of qualifying child care costs, subject to a cap
  - This is not a grant program and there is not a separate application to receive funding up front. This is a credit that is claimed when filing Indiana business taxes.
  - To be eligible, providers must be tracking expenses, evaluating their current benefits, and coordinating with a tax advisor.
  - Why this matters: Helps attract and maintain talent, supports working families, and offsets the cost of child care investments.
  - A one-page employer guide with an overview will be created on how to utilize the tax credit
  - Child Care Comments will take place on September 9, 2026
  - Q: Is there a cap for employers?
    - A: Up to 500 employees (previously 100)
  - C: When creating content, please remember to include your local partners
- Eligibility Office RFP: Lisa Mettler, Department Director of OECOSL
  - Purpose is to strengthen how OECOSL serves families and providers
  - Why this matters:
    - Opportunity to strengthen consistency in process across the state
    - Improves access for families
    - Increases accountability and accessibility across the system
  - A Stronger Statewide Model with Local Presence
    - Greater consistency across the state
    - Stronger regional footprint
    - Better connections to communities
  - Q: From the office's perspective, were you satisfied with the overall quality and quantity of re responses to the RFP?
    - A: We had strong candidates that applied so we were pleased.

b. Rule Making
- Overview of Process: Amanda DeRoss, FSSA
- What is an administrative rule
  - An agency statement that applies to classes of individual and situations that are regulated by the agency
  - Have the force and effect of law
  - Used to implement, interpret, or clarify law or policy
  - A rule must:
    - Be statutorily authorized
    - Have ascertainable standards: and
    - Be promulgated properly
  - Published in the Indiana Administrative Code
    - https://iar.iga.in.gov/
- Standards for rules
- To the extent possible, rules must:
  - Minimize expenses to regulated entities.

    - Achieve the regulatory goal in the least restrictive manner.
    - Avoid duplicating standards found in state or federal laws.
    - Be written for ease of comprehension; and
    - Have practicable enforcement
- Initiating Rulemaking
- Documents to be drafted:
    - Annotated draft of the proposed rule
    - Regulatory Analysis
    - Family Impact Statement and Certification
- Regulatory Analysis
    - The agency must conduct a regulatory analysis and answer specific questions regarding the regulations and their fiscal impact.
    - This document is publicly posted on the Indiana Register later in the process.
- Fees, fines, or civil penalties
    - If a rule contains a fee, fine, or civil penalty, additional statutory requirements apply.
    - Additionally, the rule must be presented to (and essentially approved by) the State Budget Committee.
    - All fines and civil penalties must be posted on the agency website as well.
- Rule Promulgation Process Overview Governed by IC 4-22-2
    - Internal agency approval
    - OMB/SBA approval
    - Family Impact approval
    - Publication of Notice of Public Comment Period
    - Notice of Public Hearing
    - Public hearing
    - Review and respond to public comments
    - Potential Second Public Comment Period
    - Agency final adoption
    - Attorney General approval
    - File with publisher
    - Rule becomes effective
- Internal Agency Approval
- Includes:
    - Office of General Counsel
    - Chief Financial Officer
    - Secretary
- OMB/SBA Approval
    - Submit all documents to Office of Management and Budget and State Agency.
    - Work with OMB and SBA to address any questions or concerns about the drafted language and the accompanying fiscal information.
- Family Impact Approval
    - Submit Family Impact Statement and Certification to OMB for approval.
    - Executive Order 13-05 requires OMB or their designee to approve of rules that may impact families – including all FSSA’s.
- Publication of Notice of Public Comment Period
    - Filed after receiving OMB/SBA approval letter.
    - Posts to the Indiana Register and gives the public at least 30 days to review and comment on a proposed rule.

- Mut include an overview of the intent and scope of the proposed rule and the statutory authority for the rule.
    - This is the first “official” step of the rule promulgation process.
- Notice of Public Hearing
    - Notice of Public Hearing to be published by the Indiana Register along with Notice of Public Comment Period.
    - Must be posted at least 30 days prior to the public hearing.
- Public Hearing
    - After notices and required texts are posted on the Indiana Register, a public hearing must be held after at least 30 days.
    - Hearings are required to have a remote attendance option and be webcast and archived on the FSSA webpage.
- Review and Respond to Public Comments
    - After the public hearing, all public comments received are reviewed, summarized, and responses are drafted.
    - Changes to the rule language can be made at this point, so long as it is logical outgrowth of the comments received.
- Potential Second Public Comment Period
    - If substantive comments are received, we are required to hold a second public comment period.
    - This entails publishing a second notice of public comment period, a second notice of public hearing, and holding a second public hearing. Then reading, summarizing, and responding to comments received, and potentially making changes to the rule as a logical outgrowth of the comments.
    - Also requires OMB/SBA approval again
- Agency Final Adoption
    - A binder is created to show all steps of the rule promulgation process were followed.
    - This is submitted to the FSSA Secretary, who reviews and then officially adopts the rule.
- Attorney General Approval
    - Once FSSA Secretary adopts, the binder is submitted to the AG’s office.
    - Attorney General has 45 days to review and approve.
    - Review is for form and legality.
    - Can only disapprove for cause.
- Governor’s Approval
    - After AG’s office approves, they submit the binder to the Gov’s office.
    - Governor has 15 days to review (but can extend for an additional 15 days, if notice is provided_.
    - Governor may disapprove with or without cause.
- File with Publisher
    - After the Gov’s Office approves, they submit the binder to the Indiana Register.
    - IR reviews for acceptable form, makes final corrections to the text.
- Rule Becomes Effective
    - Rules are generally effective 30 days after filing with the publisher, although a different effective date may be stated in the rule.
- Overall compliance, timeline
    - Many “behind the scenes” rulemaking pieces to comply with.
    - It is difficult to give an estimated timeline for the rulemaking process, since there are so many variables. We need OMB approval for the

    - current child care rule amendments by May 1 to ensure we meet all deadlines throughout the year to get these rules through before they expire on January 1, 2027
- Q: Can you tell us about Executive Order 2517?
    - A: When re-adopting a new rule, compare it to surrounding states. for public opportunity

c. Overview of Impact from Other Agency Rules, Tikila Welch, OECOSL
- Impact from Other Agencies
    - While the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL) leads child care licensing, several other state departments also contribute important expertise and oversight.
- Agencies and Involvement with Child Care Licensing
    - **Indiana Department of Education (IDOE)** provides guidance for early childhood programs connected to schools
    - **Department of Fire Building Services (DFBS)** reviews building plans and ensures facilities meet fire and building codes
    - **Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)** oversees health and sanitation requirements for child care environments
    - **Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) – Fire & Building Safety Division** involved in fire safety approval, especially for child care ministries
    - **Division of Family Resources, FSSA (DFR)** maintains regulatory code and supports licensing requirements
    - **Indiana State Police (ISP)** oversee the laws and rules pertaining to vehicle safety, such as the centers' special purpose bus inspections
    - **Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)** oversees well water testing, sewer, septic, and drinking water
    - **Consumer Product Safety Commission** we use their Handbook for Public Playground Safety to monitor center playgrounds
- Q: Can you give some quick information about licensing?
    - A: Initial inspection which includes the building and fire safety, then every year, the state fire marshal now determines when they will come out to do an inspection. Kitchen inspections, typically there are things that OECOSL inspects, but it is under the 410 rule from the Indiana State Health Department.

d. AYS Out of School Programs and Dashboard: Justin Armstrong, AYS
- AYS FY27 Pricing Structure and Sustainability
- History: Has been around for over 50 years, have 45 sites in central Indiana
    - With reduction in voucher amounts, approx. 400 children were receiving CCDF, it is now at 243
- School Based Provider – School Age Out of School Time (OST)
    - Serving Pre-K through 8th grade
    - Trending Up: Pre-K through 3rd and 6th – 7th
    - Trending Down: 4th and 5th, CCDF Voucher
    - Quarterly Survey: Parent and School Admin Needs and Obstacles
    - Environment and Focus: Core Values
    - Response to public commentary of need
- FY 2026
    - Total enrollment
    - Current price is $95/wk.
    - CCDF Enrollment

            - Trends
        - AYS voucher management
            - Fall semester
            - Spring semester
        - Projected operating margins
            - Variables
        - National average
            - Wallace foundations
        - Central Indiana Average OST Price
    - FY27 Pricing – New Structure and Increase Options
        - First price increase in 3 years
            - Elimination of all discounts
            - Reduced/eliminated partner fees
            - Everyone put skin in in the game
        - Front End Sliding Fee Scale
            - Insure Middle Class Affordability
        - Day Rate
            - Split week care
        - HSS advised 7% of household income cap
            - Multi child supports
        - Hardship supports through referral
        - Increased Philanthropic Corporate Supports

    - State Support – OECOSL and Legislative
        - Smarter regulation and licensing
        - Efficiency and funding
        - Direct provider input and partnership
        - Tip of the hat to Adam: reduced mail!
    - Question: How was the decision made to not pass on the charges to families?
        - A rainy-day fund made this possible

e. Collaboration Grant: Ashleigh Moon, OECOSL
    - **Due to time constraints, this topic will be tabled to the next meeting**

f. Meeting locations later in the year
    - Keep an eye on locations, we are going to try to get out of the Govt. center and around the state to where people are.
    - Q: When will we know? 48 hours or a week?
        - A: Our goal is to have multiple weeks in advance notice so people can plan appropriately. Keep an eye on the ELAC Website.
        - https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/advisory-groups/early-learning-advisory-committee/

VII. Adjourn

a. Motioned, seconded, all in favor – 11:31

Next Committee Meeting:

- **Date:** June 4, 2026
- **Time:** 10:00-11:30 EST
- **Location:** 402 W. Washington Street Indianapolis, IN 46204
- **Conference Room:** 4 & 5- Wabash Hall