PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

February 26, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: Shawn Massingale, Krystal Sanchez, Karissa Bent, Mandy Rigsby, Hannah Horvath, Della Harp, Marsha La Verne, Liberty Dryden, Bob Dannenhoffer

Staff Present: Athena Wikstrom, Danielle Walker, Charlee Scheer, Gillian Wesenberg, Ronda Osborn, Sarah Wheelock, Vanessa Pingleton, Heather Sewall, Stephanie Cravalho

The January minutes were presented for approval with one correction: WIC provides diapers, not Healthy Families.

Krystal Sanchez motioned to approve the minutes with the correction.

Stephanie Cravalho seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

Hub Update

Gillian Wesenberg, South-Central Early Learning Hub - After concluding a year-long discussion involving the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC), the Early Learning Council (ELC), Early Learning Hub Directors, and the national research organization, BUILD Initiative, draft rules for early learning hubs are being developed. These rules will be implemented over the next two years to ensure alignment with hub contracts. A public comment period will be available to provide feedback on DELC's rule updates in the coming months. Further details will be shared in upcoming meetings.

Dr. Dawn Bailey from Oregon Institute for Technology (OIT) presented Preschool Life Skills and Early Learning Behavior De-Escalation training in Douglas County on Monday and Tuesday. The training focused on early intervention and behavioral support, emphasizing preschool life skills that help prevent behaviors leading to suspension or expulsion. This training was well received, with participants expressing enthusiasm for future sessions. Dr. Bailey will also be doing in-person sessions in Klamath and Lake Counties. As of July 1, 2026, no child will be allowed to be suspended or expelled from early learning programs. This policy is currently in effect for Head Start and Preschool Promise programs. The South-Central Early Learning Hub is committed to providing resources and training to prepare providers for this transition.

Additionally, Spencer Corey, a specialist in early learning behavior and de-escalation, provided an engaging session that allowed attendees to apply real-world examples from their classrooms. Educators from various disciplines, including those working with children with special needs, found the training highly valuable.

The South-Central Early Learning Hub has two additional trainings coming up, including the Kids in Transition to School (KITS) at Home program led by Dr. Katherine Pears from the Oregon Social Learning Center (OSLC) in Eugene. Dr. Pears has researched the transition between preschool and kindergarten, particularly for children at high risk for academic and social difficulties. KITS at Home provides parents with an eight-week, online course that assists in developing skills for children to be prepared for kindergarten including social-emotional skills such as sharing and academic skills such as sorting and counting. The goal is for families who do not have access to preschool to be able to incorporate learning into tasks they are already doing such as laundry.

The Early Learning Hub has secured 50 virtual spots, including 15 for Douglas County. It prioritizes families with limited preschool access or who reside in isolated areas. Parents interested in participating should contact Athena Wikstrom at athena.wikstrom@douglasesd.k12.or.us. The current cohort is underway, and another set of sessions will begin in March. There are sessions available in both English and Spanish. The Spanish course is similar to the English course, with small cultural differences.

For more information on these initiatives, please stay tuned for upcoming meetings and outreach communications updates.

Athena Wikstrom, South-Central Early Learning Hub - The final training opportunity from the South-Central Early Learning Hub is Cards for Connection, created by Dr. Amy King, an expert in child behavior. Cards for Connection will be a virtual training series for our region. The first session is a full-day training focused on understanding trauma, with the next two sessions covering tools for building therapeutic interactions and connections with children and families. Dr. Amy believes every interaction, even outside therapy, can be therapeutic. Her tools, which cover ages from prenatal to 18, help build resilience and reduce the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES).

Dr. Amy emphasizes that trauma affects each person differently and brings a hopeful perspective, focusing on how therapeutic interventions can lead to better outcomes for children and families. Her approach is

grounded in building connections that foster resilience and provide a positive impact, offering hope even in difficult conversations.
Cards for Connection is a certification course, so individuals are asked to only sign up if they can attend all of the sessions.

Ronda Osborn, South-Central Early Learning Hub - Preschool Promise is a free, high-quality preschool for children who turn three or four by September 1 of the school year they are applying for. The South-Central Early Learning Hub is now accepting returning student forms for Preschool Promise within the region. The team is processing these forms and anticipates opening new student applications within the next few weeks. If anyone knows of families who may be interested, please encourage them to apply. Applications are accepted year-round. Families can apply for Preschool Promise at SouthCentralHubEnrollment.com and can access virtual tours at SCELH.com.
Additionally, local partners are being contacted with reminders about the South-Central Early Learning Hub's Community UPLiFT program, which connects expecting families and families with children ages zero to five or up to age 21 for those with special needs, to valuable community resources. Danielle and Ronda are available if local organizations want virtual or in-person presentations or a refresher on Community UPLiFT. With new employees joining various organizations, the goal is to ensure everyone is informed about available family resources.

New Day/New Beginnings Presentation

Mandy Rigsby, Umpqua Health Alliance – Umpqua Health Alliance (UHA) is the Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) in Douglas County and provides Oregon Health Plan (OHP) locally. The New Day Program was launched in 2017 for Umpqua Health Alliance (UHA) members to address the rising number of opioid-affected births in Douglas County. There are currently 42,000-44,000 UHA members. The goal of the New Day program is to provide early intervention for pregnant individuals struggling with substance use or mental health challenges. Many newborns who were opioid-affected at birth were transferred to Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) in Lane and Jackson Counties, increasing healthcare costs. Early intervention reduces emergency room visits, improves birth outcomes, and lowers costs.
Qualifying candidates for the New Day program must be pregnant UHA members and have a history of, or are currently struggling with, substance use or mental health concerns. The program aims to enroll participants in the first trimester of pregnancy and follow them through pregnancy and up to six weeks postpartum.
The New Day program goals include:

- Increase healthy birth outcomes.
- Prevent foster care placements.
- Ensure prenatal care and education.
- Provide family resources.
- Reduce healthcare costs by preventing emergency room overuse & NICU stays.
- Connect members with medical, behavioral, and social services.
- Empower members to take charge of their care.

Some services offered are:

- Substance use and behavioral health treatment.
- Dental and optical care, including glasses for pregnant members.
- Housing and financial support.
- Legal and Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) support, like court dates, parole, probation, and child welfare plans.
- Transportation to parole officer visits, ODHS visits, court dates, and child visits.

Postpartum members will automatically receive a warm handoff to the New Beginnings program through UHA if they choose.
UHA's services have been recently enhanced with the Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) benefit, which covers up to six months of rent and utilities for expecting moms with substance use disorders and/or mental health disorders. This benefit does not cover mortgage payments, and income criteria must be met.
Referrals can be made through providers' offices, self-referrals, Community UPLiFT, UHA Case Management Referral Forms from the Umpqua Health Website, email, fax, or hand-delivered referrals. Participation is voluntary.

Advocacy for Early Learning Programs

Shawn Massingale, United Community Action Network (UCAN) Early Head Start/ Head Start - Advocacy is essential to supporting early learning programs. Community members can contact local representatives through Oregon.gov or reach out to Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Representative Val Hoyle to share success stories and emphasize the impact of early learning programs. National resources like the National Head Start Association (NHSA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provide advocacy tools and policy information to strengthen engagement efforts. Douglas County is divided into legislative districts one, two, and four. NHSA also offers a 60th Birthday Card for Head Start for anyone who has ever been associated with Head Start in any capacity to sign this card to show support for early learning programs in a way that reaches legislators. Beyond legislative outreach, advocates can highlight how early learning programs support the workforce and the local economy. These programs enable parents to work while providing quality education for children. Advocacy efforts should also consider the financial impact of underfunded programs, which can affect jobs and community stability.

The Week of the Young Child, April 14 through 17, is an annual celebration recognizing the importance of early childhood education. Schools and programs can participate by hosting events, inviting community members to engage with classrooms, or organizing a spirit week to promote awareness. Opportunities to read to children or join a Head Start classroom for lunch are available, and those interested in participating can reach out to Shawn at shawn.massingale@ucancap.org for more details.

A statewide initiative workgroup is underway to improve preschool recruitment and enrollment across Oregon. This workgroup is comprised of five Head Start directors, five Early Learning Hub directors, and five Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) staff members. It is developing a coordinated enrollment process to ensure all available preschool spots are filled and families can access programs that are best suited to their needs. A recent survey gathered input from Preschool Promise and Head Start providers to identify enrollment challenges. The survey results were reviewed in February, and discussions will focus on identifying key barriers and potential solutions in March. By April, the group will refine recommendations and invite panelists from various counties to share insights on effective enrollment strategies.

Public Health Update

Dr. Bob Dannenhoffer, Douglas County Public Health Officer – Dr. Bob shared that The New Day Program has made remarkable strides in reducing the number of opioid-affected babies. It significantly improves care and outcomes for mothers and infants and saves the Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) money and.

Regarding public health, school exclusion weeks have just ended, with fewer children being excluded from school. However, there has been an increase in non-medical exemptions, which presents challenges nationwide. Oregon is experiencing a large pertussis (whooping cough) outbreak, with over 1,000 cases, primarily among unimmunized or under-immunized individuals. In addition, nationally, there is a significant measles outbreak. Texas had over 100 cases and one death, highlighting the need for vaccination efforts.

This flu season has been particularly severe, with an outbreak causing a four-day school closure at South Umpqua High School. Fortunately, COVID-19 cases remain low, but high pertussis, measles, and flu remain public health concerns.

CCR & R Update

Stephanie Cravalho, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), Care Connections & Education – Care Connections & Education, the regional Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) has three upcoming training events.

- From Past to Present Training on March 8: A six-hour in-person training in partnership with the Sexual Assault Task Force and Eli Cox, focusing on the history of abuse in Oregon communities and child care's role in prevention.
- Pyramid Model training will be offered on two separate days, April 11 or April 12. The first half of the day will be spent unpacking the Emotional Literacy Kit and the Tucker Turtle Kit, and the second half will be spent unpacking the Problem-Solver Solution Kit and The Super Friends Kit. Participants will receive one preschool or infant/toddler kit per classroom, worth $250.

- The third event will be the Spring Fling on May 17, a hands-on training session focused on sensory play and interactive learning. Lisa Murphy, the Ooey Gooey Lady, will be the keynote speaker. Registration opens March 1.

Partner Updates

Shawn Massingale, UCAN Early Head Start/ Head Start - There are two openings in the Glide Preschool Promise program for the 24-25 school year. If you know any interested families, please encourage them to apply soon. Families can apply on the UCANcap.org website.
Glide Preschool Promise, Head Start, and Early Head Start are accepting applications for the 2025-2026 school year. Applications are available on the UCAN website, by phone, or in person. Applications can be picked up at any Head Start office or the Douglas ESD Parent Resource Room.
The official opening of the new half-day classroom in Winston will be March 10.

Karissa Bent, Cobb Children's Learning Center— The Douglas County Child Care Coalition (DCCC) has received approval to share its mini-documentary, which is now available on YouTube. By sharing widely, the coalition hopes to raise awareness and gain traction with policymakers and the public. The coalition encourages everyone to spread the documentary to networks they are involved in. Additionally, the latest NAEYC policy update from January was released, summarizing discussions from the recent policy forum in Washington, DC. This formatted report includes statistics and findings, which can be shared alongside the documentary to support advocacy efforts.
Efforts are underway to increase awareness through potential screenings at movie theaters, child abuse prevention events, and the major conference in Portland in August. Anyone with ideas for large-scale promotion is encouraged to contact the Coalition or Robin Van Winkle at robin.vanwinkle@douglasesd.k12.or.us. The video can be seen at childcareis.org.

Vanessa Pingleton, Program Facilitator for Take Root Parenting - The Home Visiting Family Support Gathering, is scheduled for April 21 at Rogue Community College in White City. This all-day event will celebrate regional successes and include strategic planning sessions. It will feature Portland State University (PSU) presentations on data and evaluation and updates from the Center for Coordinating Oregon's Home Visiting Systems (CCOHVS) team.
Additionally, the transition of the Home Visiting Systems Coordination (HVSC) from The Ford Family Foundation (TFFF) to the CCOHVS is underway. The statement of work and budget have already been submitted to CCOHVS to apply for funding for the 2025-2026 year. The transition is expected to be completed by June 30, 2025.

Sarah Wheelock, Take Root Parenting Connections – The parent leadership informational gathering session has begun. This initiative aims to bring together parents from Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties to integrate input into programming decisions.
Spring term programming will soon begin, with new facilitators and child care providers joining Take Root to expand services. The program hopes to increase focus on adolescent and teen parenting, recognizing that parenting extends well beyond early childhood.
Additionally, Take Root has added a new staff member, allowing for greater involvement in meetings and programming efforts.

Hannah Horvath, Family Relief Nursery - The Spring Gala and Resource Event is scheduled for April 5 in Cottage Grove. Another resource event for families and community members will be coming up soon. This event will alternate between months and offer essential resources such as books, toys, clothes, food, and requested items like diapers and wipes. Dates and times to come.
Current class enrollment includes 10 children in preschool and 5 in the toddler classroom. The preschool has a capacity of 11.

Liberty Dryden, FEATT Family Network - FEATT provides support, training, and connections for families with children who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.
FEATT organizes a Mom's Night Out and a Family Fun Day each month. For March, Mom's Night Out will include a tour of the River Ranch Olive Oil facility, and Family Fun Day will include bowling. Families can stay updated on dates and times by following the FEATT Facebook page or signing up for the newsletter.

Della Harp, SMART Reading Program - SMART Southwest is currently serving just under 900 children, providing weekly reading sessions to support early literacy development. Through a partnership with the Portland Book Bank, SMART distributes gently used books and hosts free book fairs for the community, benefiting children up to eighth grade.
Expanding its reach, SMART will hold its first book drive outside the local area next month, providing book packs containing 14 books, parent resources, and educational games to further support children's learning at home. SMART is also seeking volunteers who can dedicate just one hour per week to read with children and help foster a love of reading. Those interested in making a difference are encouraged to get involved.

Colleen May-Weir, UCAN Healthy Families— UCAN is launching the Cheese and Thank You initiative to support Feeding Umpqua and combat food insecurity in the community. The kickoff events begin tomorrow at Keller Lumber, with the main event taking place on Saturday, March 1st, from 10 AM to 2 PM at Umpqua Bank on Main Street. The event will feature activities for kids and community engagement opportunities to encourage participation.
Several local restaurants are joining the initiative, including Atom Bistro and Coffee Bar (Glide), Kelly's Cozy Corner and Creekside Gas and Grill (Sutherlin), and Umpqua Community College (UCC) Café, along with various others in Roseburg. Community members can support the cause by purchasing a grilled cheese sandwich at any participating location. For every sandwich sold, $2 will be donated to Feeding Umpqua. To encourage involvement, passports will be available for participants to track their visits and support local businesses.
With food insecurity rising due to inflation, UCAN is working to expand food pantry services and assist families in need. For updates and event details, follow UCAN's Facebook page.

Athena Wikstrom, South-Central Early Learning Hub - Days Creek Charter School received Preschool Promise slots recently from the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC), and all slots have been filled at this site. The Family Governance Advisory Committee for the South-Central Early Learning Hub successfully wrote a grant application, securing funding for Little Free Libraries across the region. These libraries are already being installed in Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties, with plans for additional locations in all three counties coming soon Currently, there are three libraries in Douglas County:

- **Chalet Deli and Market** – 18377 OR 42, Camas Valley, OR
- **FISH Food Pantry** – 405 NE Jerrys Dr., Roseburg, OR
- **Oregon Outreach Clinic** – 352 S. Calapooia St., Sutherlin, OR

Families have been engaging with the communities in Days Creek and Azalea to establish a library in South County. Support in expanding book access for South County families who may not have a library nearby would be welcomed.

Next Meeting Date

March 20, 2025, from 10:00 am-12:00 pm
*One week early due to Spring Break.