

LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

Meeting Notes

April 22, 2025 | 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Attendance

Lane Stratton (v)	Shalom Rorabaugh	Jaelynn Luna
Michael Carter (v)	Jennifer Schulze	Athena Wikstrom
Michael Benson (v)	Gillian Wesenberg	Danielle Walker

Please note: For ease of member access, South-Central Early Learning Hub – Lake County Community Governance Council meetings will be held virtually unless otherwise notified.

Members of the Lake Community Governance Council reviewed the meeting minutes from February and March 2025. Michael Benson made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, which was seconded by Jennifer Schulze. There was no discussion, and the motion carried.

South-Central Early Learning Hub – Gillian Wesenberg provided an update on the South-Central Early Learning Hub. At present, there are no significant legislative updates, as the state is awaiting the May revenue forecast and additional information regarding federal funding. There is a possibility of a special session being called following the conclusion of the current legislative session due to ongoing uncertainties. Head Start is sharing that they may not be included in the President’s proposed budget. Similar to the state budget process, the Presidential budget serves as a proposal, with final funding decisions made by Congress. In response, Head Start programs are encouraging individuals to contact their legislators and advocate for continued support.

Shalom reported that Klamath Family Head Start is continuing operations as usual. Head Start has funding for one more year and has had bipartisan support in the past. Head Start remains proactive by writing letters and encouraging advocates to speak out and write letters. Klamath Family Head Start receives approximately one-third of its funding from federal sources, with the majority of program slots funded by the state. Recent changes include the closure of the regional office that previously oversaw Klamath and Lake Counties. There were 10 regional offices, and are now down to five. One of the remaining regional offices will provide oversight moving forward. The current federal budget is effective until September.

Gillian also shared that Dr. Dawn Bailey and Spencer Corey from Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) have completed training sessions in all three counties. Dr. Bailey led the Preschool Life Skills training, which emphasized preventative boundary-setting, while Spencer Corey presented De-Escalation Strategies, focusing on approaches to use when preventative measures are not effective. Lane noted that two preschool teachers from Adel attended the training and expressed appreciation for the opportunity.

Additionally, Gillian attended a Pyramid Model training hosted by Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) in Douglas County, noting how the Pyramid training and the Preschool Life Skills and De-Escalation trainings align very well. Jaelynn from CCRR provided an overview of the Pyramid Model, which is a tiered system focused on whole child development. There is an additional opportunity to attend the Pyramid Model training in Klamath County on May 17 at Klamath Community College. Participants will receive a Pyramid Model gift set valued around \$250. Spanish translation is available throughout the training. Registration is currently open at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/cb969hu>. More information about Pyramid Model can be found online at <https://www.pyramidmodel.org/online-courses-epyramid/>.

Gillian and Athena attended the Oregon Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (OASCD) Conference, where Early Learning Hubs were invited to present and share information about their work. The Oregon ASCD is expanding its focus to include early childhood education, aiming to support the continuum from prenatal through 12th grade.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Dr. Richard Solomon, founder of the PLAY Project, autism early intervention program. Dr. Solomon, who has worked with children with autism and their families for over 30 years, provided valuable insights into his approach, especially in recognizing how autism presents differently in girls and boys. His philosophy centers on empowering families with tools to gently challenge their children, believing that children with autism are not incapable, they simply may not be able to do certain things *yet*.

His approach encourages pushing boundaries while setting clear, supportive limits to help children grow beyond their comfort zones and find a space where they can be both successful and challenged. Dr. Solomon emphasized the importance of early identification and developmentally appropriate intervention, meeting children where they are and helping them strive for success.

His presentation was uplifting and filled with hope, focusing on the meaningful progress children can achieve. Known as the “fun doctor,” Dr. Solomon brings playful, engaging interactions to his work while also teaching families how to create effective, supportive boundaries. More information about Dr. Solomon and the PLAY Project, including free resources, is available at <https://playproject.org/playstore/>. Autism is becoming increasingly prevalent, with estimates that 1 in 34 students are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and the number of neurodivergent children continues to rise.

The Hub is also presenting Cards for Connection training with Dr. Amy King. Cards for Connection offers valuable tools for educators and caregivers working with children from prenatal through age 18. Dr. King has extended an opportunity for those still interested in becoming accredited with Cards for Connection. New participants must view the first recorded day of training and attend two live, virtual sessions on May 9 and May 16. Anyone interested should email Athena at athena.wikstrom@douglasesd.k12.or.us for enrollment support. The first recorded day focuses on understanding trauma and how connection can be a powerful tool to counteract the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The two half-day trainings focus on how to use the Cards for Connection tool.

Each Cards for Connection card is designed for developmental appropriateness and includes two sides: one with an activity and one with corresponding talking points to guide professionals in working with parents or children. For example, a card for 18-month-olds may include suggestions such as:

Ways to play

- Bath time
- Special one-on-one time with child
- Peek-a-boo
- Reading with the baby
- Asking another adult to play with baby to allow the caregiver a break

Activities are paired with explanations—such as how play supports problem-solving and how repetition is critical for brain development at the identified age range.

Dr. King emphasizes that therapeutic interventions can be provided by anyone, not just therapists.

Gillian added that the South-Central Early Learning Hub is also offering the Kids in Transition to School (KITS) at Home program to families across the region. KITS at Home was developed by Dr. Katherine Pears at the Oregon Social Learning Center. KITS at Home is a research-based, evidence-informed program designed to support families. The Hub is targeting families whose children have not attended preschool or who live in geographically isolated areas.

The program consists of 90-minute weekly sessions over the course of eight weeks. Families who participate could be selected through a drawing to receive a gift card, and the Hub has resources available to assist with technology access for those facing barriers. This makes the program especially valuable for families in remote areas or those with limited access to early learning opportunities.

Athena noted that KITS at Home is offered in both English and Spanish. The Spanish version incorporates culturally relevant content and adaptations to better serve Spanish-speaking families, ensuring that all participants receive tools in a way that is meaningful and accessible to them. The Hub is actively encouraging registration to reach as many families as possible.

Gillian also shared that she is serving on the Rules Committee for Early Learning Hubs. Since the inception of Early Learning Hubs on July 1, 2014, there have been no formal rule changes. There are two rounds of rule updates scheduled, one this year and another next year. Three Hubs are currently involved in providing input to the Early Learning Council (ELC), and opportunities for public input are available for those interested in contributing feedback.

Michael Carter, Jennifer Schulze, and Lane Stratton expressed interest in learning more about the proposed Early Learning Hub rules. In response, Athena shared an email with the Lake Community Governance Council providing details about the Rules Advisory Committee meetings scheduled for April 23, April 24, and May 8.

Gillian continued the Hub update, advising that the Ways and Means Road Show is scheduled to take place at Klamath Community College this Friday, April 25, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Children's Institute (CI) has encouraged community members to attend the Ways and Means Road Shows and speak about the importance of early childhood investments. Sharing personal stories and perspectives is especially impactful during these sessions. Attendees are urged to arrive early, as the room tends to fill quickly.

Michael Carter recommended preparing a one-pager that pairs personal stories with key facts to help legislators clearly understand the message. Gillian emphasized the importance of making sure decision-makers know that Lake County is represented and part of the conversation.

Gillian was also recently appointed to the Early Learning Council (ELC) Home Visiting Committee. She advocates for the unique challenges faced by geographically isolated communities like Lake County. She regularly shares stories to illustrate the barriers residents face, such as long travel times, and limited access to services. Members of the Lake Community Governance Council also shared their own experiences and challenges.

The South-Central Early Learning Hub is continuing to accept Preschool Promise applications for the 2024-2025 school year and has opened both returning and new student applications for the 2025-2026 school year. Klamath Family Head Start's Lakeview site has chosen not to continue with Preschool Promise for the upcoming year and will instead expand services for children from birth to age three. The Hub has recommended to the Department of Early Learning and Care (DEL) that the Preschool Promise slots that were assigned to Klamath Family Head Start, be reallocated to Honker Preschool.

Danielle provided an overview of Community UPLIFT, which connects expecting families and families with children from birth to five years old, and up to age 21 with special needs, to community resources. Families continue to have the option to select a Community UPLIFT on both the new and returning Preschool Promise applications. With the opening of the Preschool Promise applications, the Hub anticipates an increase in Community UPLIFT referrals.

Online referrals for Community UPLIFT can be submitted at www.community-uplift.com or via smartphone by texting "uplift1" to (541) 351-3100. For more information about Community UPLIFT, or a presentation, contact Danielle Walker at Danielle.walker@douglasesd.k12.or.us.

Community UPLIFT has a 30-second public service announcement, available online at:

Spanish subtitles: <https://vimeo.com/835904539/347a52dd74>

English subtitles: <https://vimeo.com/834421711/b5121a718b>

Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) – Michael Benson shared that there are currently 21 children receiving Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) services in Lake

County, with one child finishing the qualification process. Last week, kindergarten transition meetings for children transitioning into Lake County School District #7 were completed. One additional transition meeting for North Lake is scheduled in May. For the 2025-2026 school year, about five children will be leaving the program, and approximately seventeen will continue receiving EI/ECSE services. With ten starting in EI/ECSE at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, EI/ECSE enrollment could be in the mid-twenty range by this time next year.

Michael also mentioned that the annual EI/ECSE plan is being developed and will be shared with the Lake Community Governance Council for feedback. He is hoping to gather input from the Council, as well as programs like Honker Preschool and Klamath Family Head Start, with whom they work directly with. The plan includes the yearly calendar and procedural details. Input can be submitted until May 15 to be considered before the annual plan is finalized and submitted to regional oversight in Douglas County.

Lakeview School District #7 – Michael Carter shared that Jennifer is doing a great job with attendance efforts at the district, and they are hopeful that legislative support will help with a potential new bill related to attendance. He also mentioned that many staff members are out due to illnesses, which makes substitutes an essential part of maintaining operations. The district is preparing for the final quarter of the year.

Klamath Family Head Start, Lakeview Site - Shalom Rorabaugh reported that Head Start is currently preparing for the upcoming 2025-2026 program year and has submitted their grant application. Many children currently enrolled in Head Start will be transitioning to kindergarten for the 2025–2026 school year. The Lakeview site is awaiting approval to expand Early Head Start (EHS) slots and cannot proceed with EHS implementation until approval is received. They are continuing to plan as much as possible. Head Start slots for children ages three to five are progressing as normal.

Care Connections & Education, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) – Jaelynn Luna shared that the Spring Fling at Klamath Community College (KCC) on April 5 was a success. There with over 60 attendees, including representation from Lake County. The keynote speaker was Sharon Krull, founder of PlayPower.

CCRR supports child care providers with grant applications, including the Rural Improvement Grant. In the first round, Douglas County child care providers received approximately \$125,000, and Klamath County providers were awarded about \$83,000. The Child Care Infrastructure Grant opened for its second round on March 26.

Workforce recognition opportunities are also available for child care providers, offering \$500 payments for qualifying providers. Applications can be submitted through the Oregon Registry Online (ORO).

Regional Inclusion Specialists are meeting with the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) in Salem to learn what to expect, and provide input on the Every Child Belongs initiative.

Next Meeting: May 27, 2025, at 1:00 pm.

Adjournment: With no further business, the Lake County Community Governance Council was adjourned.