

Child Care Task Force of Ellis County Meeting Minutes

January 24, 2023

Welcome Center – 2700 Vine Street

Virtual Option: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Mission Statement:

To create and maintain a sustainable, quality childcare environment that assists in attracting employees to Ellis County, while developing our children into the next generation of community leaders and workforce.

Vision Statement:

A community in which current and prospective employees are productive while their children are nurtured and educated in a safe and stimulating childcare environment.

• **Committee Member Introductions:**

Amy Gerstner	Erin Gibson	Mindy Kuhn
Amy Staab	James Robben	Olga Detrixhe
Andrea and Nick Felder	Janet Brungardt	Pat and Tony Schumacher
Andrea Haas	Janice Wilson	Rebekah Meyer
Andrew Cutright	Jean Basgall	Sabina Hoffman
Angie Tetlow	Jeff Brull	Sandy Jacobs
April Brown	Jennifer Hecker	Sarah Meitner
Barb Wasinger	Jessamyn Staples	Sarah Wasinger
Brett Schmidt	Jill Keller	Shae Veach
Brianna Bernasconi	Kaitlin Robben	Shane Smith
Brooke Deines	Kara Burkholder	Shelley Scheck
Callie Lewis	Kayla Ford	Steve Keil
Dacia Haselhorst	Kayla Hollern	Tanya Koehn
Dana Stanton	Kristen Gaschler	Tara Witthuhn
Dava Gaschler	Kristy Younger	Tasha Eichman
David Clingan	Laney Roths	Tori Ruder
Donna Hudson-Hamilton	Lisa Lane	Tricia Dreher
Doug Ford	Lucy Bouscher	Vernie Pritchett
Doug Williams	Melissa Schoenberger	Mindy Kuhn
Eddie Herrman	Michelle Dannels	Olga Detrixhe
Elliot Binder	Mason Ruder	Peyton Niernberger
Stephanie Hockersmith	Christina Janney	Natasha Cecil

- **Governor Laura Kelly's Executive Order:** https://hayschamber.com/sites/default/files/eo-20-02_executed1.pdf
 - Reorganizing the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council
 - Update from Hays City Mayor Mason Ruder- David Tollen Lt. Governor to discuss the task force. Ellis Co. task force is ahead of the curve w/ needs assessments, action. "Childcare Go Team" liaison with task force with legislators. KS Dept of Commerce is involved. Wage assistance, benefits for providers like KAPRS, cooperation with sales tax program and using those funds to help with childcare. DCF rates are expanding. 20 million pots SPARK program for new construction and start-up grants for center, home daycare. First action may be bump in ratios, but that's not a long-term solution. KSchildrenscabinet.org can be visited to sign up for newsletter updates. They think Ellis Co. task force is doing a great job.
- **ChildCare Aware of Kansas Grants – Update**
 - We were approved to apply for the \$47,000 in grant funds for our task force
 - We have narrowed the grant application down to two projects. Final information is being gathered for the projects to submit the proposals. The grant should be finalized by mid-February, with the full

amount being requested. Preschool salary position for Hays Area Children's Center. Learning Cross could potentially open a new facility that could serve 37 spots if they do open a facility.

•Remaining Short-Term Goals

- Child Care Tax Credits – Host a Lunch & Learn to Discuss Benefit for Employers
 - Date: February 28th from noon to 1 p.m.
 - Location: Smoky Hill Country Club
 - Cost: \$14 to attend, meal included

- Activating sub-committees
 - Assembling Child Care Provider Appreciation Planning Sub-Committee – National Provider Appreciation Day is May 12, 2023 Dana and Brett volunteered to be on this sub-committee

 - Assembling Marketing Sub-Committee
 - Meeting date scheduled for February 2nd from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Welcome Center
 - All are welcome to be a part of this effort- Tasha and Dana will be on this sub-committee
 - We will focus on attracting new child care providers to the profession and getting the business community more engaged in solutions to address needed spots.

 - Food Program Sub-Committee: Who should be invited to have initial discussion?
 - Open invitation to any chamber member who may be able to provide food or transportation for food, such as local schools and caterers
 - Child care providers
 - Additional task force members- Options- Jennifer Hecker, and Tori as a provider, James Robben from Grow Hays and someone from HACC have volunteered to be on this.
 - KDHE *Look at Kansas Food Bank, and also let Sarah know who else could be on this committee. Kelly at Sunshine Connections. Look at WeKan.

•Identifying Long-Term Goals and Their Priorities

- Activating a 501(c)3 through The Chamber that could be used to apply for specific grants being sought by the task force – The Chamber is having its first meeting on February 15th to discuss this possibility
- Ellis County currently needs to open 523 spots to reach full capacity- the census data changed to reflect the current open number of spots per Dana
- Creating quarterly professional development opportunities for providers
- Development of a pay to play program and how that would work
- Providing greater access to child care for children with special needs
- Giving access to benefits like health insurance to providers
- Creating pay equity and addressing livable wages
- Adding CDA certification at local high schools Donna is still working on this still in the next year or two. Other communities in the area are interested in this, but new courses / educators need to be implemented. There are infrastructures existing but they do have CDA observers on staff.
- Establish a foundation fund to subsidize infant care
- Address need for second shift care
- Investigating and working with local legislators to see if birth to five childcare could be funding much like K-12 education Sarah is having a Feb 4th legislature coffee 8:30am – 9:30am with three representatives attending about this topic. Any questions you have for them Sarah can ask those questions if you send them to her.

- Considering stipends for long-term providers
- **Childcare Aware of Kansas Updates – Tanya Koehn**
 - Update on staffing changes
 - Current initiatives for providers
 - Communities in Action Summit on April 4th
 - Current attendees include Brett Schmidt, Mason Ruder, Dana Stanton, and Sarah Wasinger. Anyone else can attend as well in Lindsborg.
- **Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center Updates – Dana Stanton**

Professional Childcare Training- over the max room occupancy, can we July 31st – Aug 1st Hilton Garden Inn. Meals provided, door prizes, vendor booths, goodie bags and handbooks. Anyone can contribute prizes or have a booth. Nice prizes are being looked at by Dana like massage, pedicure, \$50 gift cards. KREDA Conference in March is going to focus on childcare.
- **Round Table Updates from Task Force Members**

Parents attending meeting are looking for infant care for the summer. They also work at Holiday Inn Express and can donate items. Donna signed a new provider to allow for 5 more spots. Lisa Murphy presenter is coming to Feb. 20th in-service at FHSU. There is a cost for this, \$10 per day. Jeff Brull, working on Fall start date for the Hays Med childcare center. East of the Center of Health Improvement will be the location and can utilize some existing parking and potentially use the gym. Expected cost of build may be exceeded, but working on keeping that down. A survey went out to Hays Med staff to gauge interest in their open spots. HACC update- new Director is Brandi Oakley, and we have one open board member position. Looking for a community member. KDHE has CDA scholarships and technical support. They also have free trainings, and lots of support. They have also worked with Childcare Aware to do new childcare provider training and informational programs. Offered support for the 5/12 appreciation date. Jennifer- asked if we dedicate a section in the newsletter about the task force? Yes, we do. Mason, Holy Family Elementary is moving the 6th graders over to TMP and offering a new preschool program to 3 year olds for a 2 day ½ day option or a 5 day full days. Open wait list March and would start in August.
- **Future Meeting Date and Time: February 28th at 4 p.m. – Hays Welcome Center**