



Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2026

31C – 6th Floor (A & B Suites) and MS Teams

10:00 a.m.

Members, Liaisons and Guests in Attendance: Ms. Jackie Franco, Dr. Tuba Fehr, Ms. Jessica Meade, Dr. Joe Bonner, Dr. Angelina Williams, Dr. Katie Baker, Dr. Kristin Brethel-Haurwitz, Ms. Ila Flannigan, Dr. Helena Gabor, Ms. Heather Rogers, Ms. Tammie Edwards, Mr. Gregg Nelson, Ms. Susan Borst, Ms. Kenesha Dudley, Ms. Sheena Malone, Ms. Anne Schmitz, Ms. Wendy Kales, Dr. Judith Walters, Ms. Megan Vaughan, Ms. Margaret Fletcher, Ms. Ruth Fraley, Ms. Ann Stephen, Ms. Debra Harding, Dr. Rebecca Hommer

I. Welcome: Co-Chair, Ms. Jackie Franco opened the meeting and welcomed board members, guests, and acknowledged new ECDC liaison Maria Kanu and guest Claire McCann.

The Child Care Board (CCB) noted several key updates since the January meeting:

- Final work plans for all five committees were completed and approved.
- The revised CCB Charter was approved and signed by the NIH Director (Dr. Bhattacharya) and will remain in effect for five years.
- Upcoming initiatives include the voting membership campaign and Take Your Child to Work Day.

II. Approval of Minutes: Co-Chair, Dr. Tuba Fehr called for approval of the January 21, 2026, meeting minutes. A motion to approve was made, seconded, and approved by a quorum of voting members.

III. Committee Reports:

A. Subsidy Committee: Dr. Tuba Fehr presented the Subsidy Program report.

Key Findings:

- Participation declined in 2025 (15% drop from 2024), though number of children served remained stable.
- Budget utilization improved slightly (~52%) but remains underutilized (~\$115K of \$220K).
- Participation remains concentrated among lower-income, single-income households.
- Minimal participation from dual-income families (3 of 38 participants).
- Evidence of “aging out” trend may further reduce participation.

Key Issues Identified:

- Current AGI eligibility cap (\$100K) excludes majority of NIH workforce.
- Awareness gaps among eligible employees.
- Administrative burden (reimbursement process complexity).

Recommendations:

- Increase AGI eligibility cap to \$150K to capture more dual income participants.
- Maintain reimbursement cap at \$5,000.
- Expand outreach (especially to new parents and moderate-income families).
- Improve administrative processes (automation, reminders, simplified reimbursements).
- Promote use for summer/after-school care.
- Develop a quarterly utilization dashboard.

Discussion included potential overlap with external childcare programs (Headstart Programs offering Pre-Kindergarten (Age 3-4) which serve families within financial income bands for free, and implications of DC Flexible Spending Accounts (DCFPA) being increased from \$5k to \$7500 per year.

B. Membership Committee: Dr. Joe Bonner presented updates on the upcoming membership cycle.

Highlights:

- Membership drive for 2026–2029 term is upcoming.
- Applications open via ORS/DATS website; deadline: May 1, 2026.
- Two Q&A sessions scheduled (April 22 and April 30). Attendees are strongly encouraged to join the earlier April 22 session to get timely guidance and have more opportunity for follow-up before the application deadline.

Reminders:

- Supervisor approval is required.
- Members must attend meetings and serve on at least two committees.
- Board seeks diverse representation across NIH.

Additional Update:

- Non-voting members serving on subcommittees may now serve as committee co-chairs (excluding Membership Committee), per updated charter.

C. Wait List Committee: Ms. Heather Rogers presented updates on the NIH Child Care waitlist.

Transition Update:

- Waitlist management transitioned in-house following cancellation of LifeWorks contract.

New Process:

- Families submit interest form -receive secure application-must have need within 90 days.
- Emphasis on immediate need rather than long-term waitlisting.

Data Highlights (Oct 2025–Feb 2026):

- 89 applications sent; 21 rejected (eligibility/90-day window issues).
- Continued decline rates when offers are made.

Key Changes:

- Pregnant families are permitting to waitlist their new child and can apply within 90 days of their desired date of enrollment.
- Declining an offer at one center does not affect status at others.
- Centers are now tracking reasons for declined offers.

Challenges:

- Loss of historical data continuity due to system change.
- Need for improved data collection and analysis.

Next Steps:

- Continue refining system and policies.
- Improve data tracking on declines and enrollment trends.
- Work with centers on increasing enrollment strategies.

IV. Child & Family Programs Updates (CFP) & Center Director Reporting**Child & Family Programs:** Ms. Susan Borst provided updates:

- Director (Dr. Day) conveyed appreciation for the meeting invitation and acknowledged the work of the NIH Child Care Board but was unable to attend today's meeting.
- Strong collaboration continues between committees and ORS on contract language and program improvements.
- Director quarterly meeting emphasized data-driven decision-making and collaboration with centers.

Program Updates:

- Waitlist families will receive quarterly profile updates (due April 10).
- DATS Transportation Office returned to Building 31A, 1A-11.

Take Your Child to Work Day (April 23, 2026):

- Over 2,500 children registered; 170+ activities planned.
- Phase II registration opens April 7.
- Clarifications provided on access requirements and forms (e.g., ACVP, visitor policies).

Other Updates:

- Childcare enrollment reports are due April 15.
- ORS to meet with centers to assess enrollment trends and goals.

Child Care Center Reports:**Executive Child Development Center (ECDC):** Center Director, Ms. Anne Schmitz reported that:

- GSA partnership restructuring: safety inspections completed.
- Continued high safety standards and background checks.
- Fully enrolled summer camp program for school-aged children.
- Temporary backup care support services provided to 18 children during school closures.

Northwest Child Care Center (NWCCC): Center Director, Ms. Wendy Kales shared several updates:

- Valentine's Dance, Lunar New Year celebration, and Read Across America activities.
- Increased parent engagement (reading programs, events).
- Successful MSDE- Office of Child Care Licensing Inspection with no deficiencies.
- Spring programming underway (gardening, sports).

Parents of Preschoolers, Inc. (POPI): Center Director, Ms. Kenesha Dudley reported:

- Center maintained NAEYC and Maryland EXCELS accreditations.
- Focus on community-building and enrichment programs (STEM, sign language, music, and POPI Playoffs were a new Community Engagement Programs).
- New initiatives: field trips, extracurricular activities, spring break camp for former matriculated students attending MCPS area schools.
- Teacher Appreciation Day planning underway.

All centers reported successful licensing inspections with no non-compliances.

VI. Announcements and Adjournments: The Board was reminded of upcoming meetings and events:

- Upcoming meetings:
 - April 22, 2026
 - June 3, 2026
- April events:
 - Take Your Child to Work Day (April 23)
 - Wellness Campaign activities and Kaiser webinars offered in April.

With no additional business, discussion, or questions, Ms. Franco adjourned the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

The next CCB meeting will be held on April 22, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in person and MS Teams.