



November 12, 2025 Board Minutes

Date: November 12, 2025

Location: Zoom/Telephone Call-in Meeting

Minutes Taken By: Tracey Edwards

Time: Meeting called to order at 11:02 am CST by Chase Christianson, Chair

ELCNWF Staff members present in person: Suzan Gage, Executive Director; Matt Bonner, Administrative Director;

ELCNWF Staff present via Phone/Zoom: Sam Sweazy, Finance Director; Lindsay Holmes, Education Services Director; Ken Whittaker, Operations Director; Priscilla Greco, Staff Accountant; Felecia Dorchuck; Accounts Receivable Specialist; Tracey Edwards, HR and Administrative Support Specialist

Guests present: Jeff Carter, Board Attorney;

Full Board: ☒ Yes ☐ No Quorum: Yes In attendance: 16/24

Executive Comm. Yes X No

Roll Call to Include Board Members on Zoom/Telephone: Yes

Executive Committee	First Name	Last Name	Present	Present Via Phone/Zoom	Excused Absence	Unexcused Absence
●	Tony	Bennett		1		
	Rachel	Chima			1	
●	Chase	Christianson		1		
●	Irvin	Clark			1	
	Doug	Crosby		1		
	Sharon	Gaskin		1		
	Zach	Gilmore		1		
	Kenneth	Griffin		1		
●	Tiffani	Hinds			1	
	Jeanne	Hitchcock		1		
	<u>Lee Ann</u>	<u>Case</u>			1	
	Erin	Johnson		1		
	Missy	Lee		1		
	Gina	McAllister			1	
	Mary	McKenzie		1		
	Juliana	Melara		1		
	Crista	Miller		1		
	Sarah	Quantara			1	
	Thomas	Register		1		
●	Joe	Seabrook			1	
	Joseph	Taylor		1		

	Richard	Williams			1	
●	Myrtis	Wynn		1		
	Veronica	Watkins		1		
		Total		16	8	

Utilization Report for Direct Services

We reimburse contracted providers in each of the seven counties served. The information below shows the payment to School Readiness and VPK providers for direct services (slots) and compares the previous month.

SCHOOL READINESS		
	August 2025	September 2025
<u>School Readiness</u> Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots)	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,113,522.45	SR Slot Dollars – \$1,154,311.60
	Children Paid – 2,389	Children Paid – 2,281
	SR+ Direct Services - \$1,005.94	SR+ Direct Service - \$1,064.39
	SR+ Children Paid - 4	SR+ Children Paid - 5
VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN		
<u>VPK Program</u> Payments to Child Care for VPK services	August 2025	September 2025
	VPK Payments – \$312,735.11	VPK Payments – \$507,613.99
	Children Paid – 1,429	Children Paid – 1,488

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND STAFF at 11:02 a.m. CDT by Chase Christianson, Chair

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA AND CONENT AGENDA – Chase Christianson

VOTE NEEDED: To approve the meeting agenda and the consent agenda as presented.

MOTION: Mary McKenzie moved to approve the meeting and consent agenda as presented.

Seconded by Jeanne Hitchcock

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

3. COMMITTEE/FULL BOARD REPORTS – Chase Christianson

3.1. Executive Committee- Chase Christianson

3.1.1. Board Membership Appointment – Lee Anne Case, DCF Child Care Regulation Rep. - *Vote Needed*
Dept. of Children and Families Northwest/Northeast Regional Chief of Licensing, Jeanne Durden, has appointed LeeAnne Case, Licensing Supervisor, to fill the DCF Child Care Regulation Representative position on the Board. The position was left vacant after Miatta Jalaber’s announcement that she would not seek reappointment to another term.

VOTE NEEDED: To approve the appointment of Lee Anne Case to the Board as the DCF Child Care Regulation Representative.

MOTION: Sharon Gaskin moved to approve the appointment of Lee Anne Case to the Board as the DCF Child Care Regulation Representative.

Seconded by Veronina Watkins

Motion carried unanimously with no members recusing from vote.

3.2. Finance Committee – Tiffani Hinds, Treasurer and Committee Chair

3.2.1. FY26 DEL Fiscal Monitoring and MKA Audit Updates – Information Only

DEL has begun its FY26 fiscal monitoring which is conducted by one of its contacted monitoring firms, Thomas Howell Furgison (THF). ELCNWF has submitted the first set of requested information and is waiting for THF to make their sample selections and schedule the onsite monitoring visit.

The annual single audit which is performed by MKA is also underway. ELCNWF has submitted the first set of requested information and expects to begin the audit work with MKA in early January.

3.3. Policy and Personnel Committee- Joe Seabrook

3.3.1. No Report

3.4. Education and Program Committee- Dr. Irvin Clark

3.4.1. TEACH Early Childhood Scholarship® Program Utilization Report - *Information Only*

The TEACH Early Childhood® Scholarship Program provides scholarships and comprehensive support to early learning educators and directors, family child care educators and owners, out-of-school-time educators, and child care facility owners. Funded by DEL, the program makes higher education more attainable by offering a variety of scholarships for early learning credentials, college credits and certificates, and degrees in early childhood education or related fields. A copy of Northwest Florida's 2024-2025 report and utilization data have been included in the board meeting packet for board members' review.

A grant with CareerSource Chipola was announced for paid internships for new child care teachers in Calhoun, Jackson, Holmes, and Washington Counties.

3.5. Development Ad Hoc Committee – Erin Johnson

3.5.1. Top 20 for 20 Years Campaign Update

At the September board meeting, we announced the ELCNWF's "Top 20 for 20 Years" campaign as part of our celebration of serving children, families, and early learning providers across our region for 20 years. ELCNWF sent invitations to approximately 30 individuals and businesses who have been long-time partners and supporters and have received six donations of \$1,000 each so far:

1. Denise Folsom, The Legacy House Counseling Center
2. Scott Clemons, The Clemons Company, Inc.
3. Britt Landrum III, Landrum, Inc.
4. Craig Goodson, Inspired Technologies of North Florida, Inc.
5. Keith and Carol Bonner

6. Sam and Kim Sweazy

As a “Top 20” sponsor, donors will receive:

- Recognition in our 20th Anniversary events and communications
- Logo placement on promotional materials and social media
- Acknowledgment in our annual report and on our website
- Opportunities to connect with our network of families, providers, and community partners

If you or someone you know may be interested in joining the campaign, please contact Tami Valdez at tami.valdez@elcnwf.org or by visiting our giving page at [Top 20 for 20 Years.](#)

4. Executive Director Overview

4.1. Organization Update

4.1.1. 2024-2025 Annual Report

ELCNWF recently completed its 2024-2025 Annual Report as part of our annual grant agreement deliverables. A copy of the annual report has been included in the board meeting packet for board members’ review.

4.1.2. Success Stories

From time to time, we hear success stories from parents who we have served in one of programs. We recently heard two stories we wanted to share as we always enjoy a reminder of why we do what we do and the impact we all make for the future of children, families and our communities.

Impact of School Readiness Child Care Tuition Assistance Program

During a recent visit to urgent care, an ELCNWF team member met a Nurse Practitioner Assistant (NPA) who was taking care of them who said they and the person with them looked familiar. The team member explained that they both work for the Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida, and one of them works on the Family Support Team. They asked the NPA’s name and determined that the NPA was someone the team member helped in our School Readiness program back when we were located on Florida Ave. The NPA then shared that they were a big reason why the NPA had their job at urgent care and was now able to help take care of their needs.

Impact of Access for ALICE Child Care Tuition Assistance Program

A parent recently moved to our area from another state to escape a domestic violence situation with a young child. They found a job with a local organization but didn't qualify for the School Readiness program due to being over income with a family size of two. When an employee of the organization reached out to us to see if there was anything we could do, we contacted the parent and was able to determine them eligible for the Access for ALICE child care tuition assistance program that is funded by the St. Joe Community Foundation.

4.1.3. Voices for Healthy Children Grant Update

The Executive Director and staff continue the work on programming as part of the Voices for Healthy Children grant from the American Heart Association. Most recently, the work has been with a select group of child care provider owners and directors on a 6-month Early Childhood and Childcare Provider Advocacy Training Plan. This plan creates a powerful, unified voice for families and childcare providers, empowering them to advocate for high-quality, affordable, and accessible childcare for all. It also builds a network of confident leaders who can effectively influence policy, funding, and public perception to ensure every child has the best possible start in life. The 6-month plan culminates with a trip to the state Capitol in February 2026 to visit with legislators and their staff, putting the training into practice.

4.1.4. Organization and Community Engagements

Below is a list of organization and community engagements attended by the Executive Director during October 2025 that aligns with the ELCNWF's strategic plan, strengthens our partnerships, and advances the focus of early learning at the local, state, and national level.

10/3 Bay Co. Chamber of Commerce First Friday Sponsorship and Presentation

10/16 Gulf Co. Chamber of Commerce Monthly Luncheon Presentation

10/20 Florida PN-3 Power Sharing Group Meeting

10/23 Early Childhood Provider Advocacy Training with Bay Solutions

10/29 Florida Head Start Association in Orlando

4.1.5. Legislative Updates

The Executive Director will give an update on the 2026 legislative priorities and any legislation that has been filed ahead of the 2026 legislative session that begins in January.

4.1.6. 1-Year Plan Quarter 1 Status Report

The Executive Director has included in the board packet a status report of ELCNWF's fiscal year 2025-2026 1-Year Plan through the first quarter. Most goals and objectives are on track to be met by the end of the fiscal year, and some goals have already been met. One goal is off track and ELCNWF staff are re-strategizing how to get it back on track in the second quarter.

4.1.7. October Data Dashboard

Coalition staff have created a new monthly dashboard to review and highlight certain monthly services by each department. A copy of the October dashboard has been included in the board meeting packet for the Board's review.

4.2 Monthly Service Numbers (October 2025)

- 4.2.1. School Readiness and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist (*See SR and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist Report*)
- 4.2.2. Contracted Providers (*See Total VPK Contracted Providers VS. VPK Programs with CLASS Scores Report*)
- 4.2.3. Education Services (*See Service and Numbers for Education Services Report*)
- 4.2.4. Media Coverage/Activity/Events (*See Media Coverage.Activity.Events Report*)

- 4.2.5. Child Care Resource and Referral Numbers (*See Childcare Resource and Referral Service Numbers Report*)
- 4.2.6. Help Me Grow Service Numbers (*See Help Me Grow Data Reports*)
- 4.2.7. Inclusion/Child Service Numbers (*See Numbers for Child Services Report*)
- 4.2.8. Early Childhood Care Coordination (*See Service Numbers Report*)
- 4.2.9. Contracted Provider CLASS Scores (*See Service Numbers Report*)

4.3 Coalition Fraud Update

- 4.3.1. ELCNWF staff have referred one School Readiness recipient case to DEL and the Bureau of Public Assistance Fraud (BPAF). The case remains under review with BPAF with a pending assignment status. The Executive Director will continue to provide updates on this case and any new cases at upcoming board meetings.

4.4 Internal Monitoring (*See Internal Monitoring Reports*)

- 4.4.1. St. Joe Community Foundation ALICE Program Expenditure Report

5. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPORT

No report.

- 6. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Members of the public are allowed up to 3 minutes each to address the board.
- 7. NEXT MEETING:** January 14, 2026 (No meeting in December)
- 8. ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:21 a.m.