

**JASPER, MARION, AND POWESHIEK (JMP) COUNTIES EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA  
BOARD MEETING Minutes**

Foundation Offices at Ahrens Park, 1510 Penrose St. Grinnell, IA 50112  
5:30 pm - Wednesday, February 25, 2026

County	Name	Present		Absent	Excused	Unexcused	Non-Board
		IP	V				
P	Patricia Hinrichs-(human services)- Board Chair		X				
M	Denise Bontrager (education)		X				
M	VACANT (education)-						
J	Mitzi Smith (faith)		X				
P	Doug Cameron (citizen)-		X				
P	Mary Lindberg (business)- Board Treasurer		X				
J	Britney Schnathorst (citizen)		X				
J	Julie Wendl (health)		X				
M	Michael Kacmarynski- (consumer) Board Vice Chair		X				
	Amy Blanchard (Director)	X					X
	Sheena Sullivan (Short Years Partnership)		X				X
	Sara Paar (MICA Family Connections)		X				X

- I. The meeting was called to order by Hinrichs, Chair, at 5:31pm.
- II. Roll Call: JMP board members present include Bontrager, Cameron, Hinrichs, Kacmarynski, Lindberg, Schnathorst, Smith, and Wendl. A quorum was present.
- III. Public Comment: Paar reported several families have moved out of the county. Program referred them to programs in their new areas. Program received one referral from Maternal Health Clinic. Blanchard encouraged the program to be visible at events and with community partners to assist with enrollments. HHS will continue sending capacity reports and there is a strong focus on performance measures that will only increase as family support possibly moves to HHS control with the proposed legislation. Sullivan reported Short Years has completed 468 visits this year. On track to complete 800 visits and there has been no staff turnover for two years.
- IV. **Motion** to approve minutes of January 28, 2026, board meeting by Lindberg. **Seconded** by Smith. Motion passed unanimously.
- V. Executive and Committee Reports
  - a. Treasurer's Report: Report current through February 22 was included in board packet. Lindberg noted there are fewer vouchers to approve monthly as we only have four contracts. JMP is on track for spending. Report was filed for audit.
  - b. Preschool Scholarship Report: Blanchard noted preschools are currently enrolling families for the 2026-27 school year. JMP will not make a scholarship application available until funding for ECI is determined in the legislature. Some preschools are giving families current year application. ASQ-SE kits are a possible investment the board could make for preschools this year as they might be required for preschools with scholarship agreements next year.
  - c. Director's Report: Blanchard expressed gratitude for Association leadership, frustration with the legislative process, and shared outreach efforts to invest ECI funding in the JMP area with the board. Blanchard noted she joyfully reassigned board member perspectives to reflect our newly promoted consumer on the board, Michael, who welcomed son, Trey, on February 12.

VI. Old Business:

- a. HHS Early Childhood and Family Services Plan: Amended HSB 632/SSB3111 bill summary was included in the board packet. Blanchard noted the amended bill language was released in the afternoon of 2.25.26. Proposed language will retain ECI local boards but shift responsibility and funding for home visiting to HHS oversight, eliminating ECI involvement. Will also eliminate DeCat, CPPC, and ICAPP, shifting those funds to ECFS within HHS. First line of advocacy is to refute misinformation shared in committee hearings. Blanchard will share legislative advocacy with the board as requested.
- b. FY27 RFP: Blanchard thinks there will not be time to issue RFP's this year. Contract renewals are the likely scenario.

VII. New Business

- a. Preschool Quality Improvement Grants: Board reviewed summaries of requests from 10 preschools. One preschool asked for an extension due to illness, one preschool decided not to apply, and one request was added after the summary was released to the board. Grants are intended to improve the learning environments for children. Requests were limited to \$2,500 and supporting budgets were supplied for each proposal. **Motion** to approve grants by Wendl. **Seconded** by Lindberg. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. Literacy Grants: Blanchard reached out to three organizations supporting Dolly Parton Imagination Library efforts in each county. Each program shared operating costs in their proposal. After discussion and based on children served, the board amended grant amounts to reflect program enrollment. **Motion** by Bontrager to approve \$10,00 for Jasper, \$7,000 for Marion, and \$4,000 for Poweshiek. **Seconded** by Smith. Motion passed unanimously.
- c. Child Fairs/Awareness Events: Board reviewed new proposal from Jasper County Public Health regarding child safety. **Motion** to approve request by Wendl. **Seconded** by Bontrager. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Other:

- IX. Adjournment: Motion by Bontrager to adjourn. Seconded silently by Cameron. Next meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2026 via Zoom at 5:30 pm. Meeting adjourned at 6:23 pm.

## Preschool QI grants 2/25/26 5 pm

Preschool	Amount Requested	Please describe how your preschool would utilize these grant funds:	Students Served
Newton Christian Preschool	\$ 2,500.00	We are in need of shelving for our art, manipulatives our current ones are beginning to come apart. Along with a simple machines set to help expand our science center. Outdoor scale to bring math/science to our playground.	49
Mustang Scholars Preschool	\$ 1,800.00	Mustang Scholars would like to utilize the requested funds to add to our classroom with audio and visual supports. We would like to add a small smart board to our classroom to show videos for our daily topics, as well as utilizing it to add more gross motor opportunities as we do not have a playground. Currently, we are using an iPad for our students to watch (14 each section). We would like to buy a Tonie box, headphones and a some recordable tonies figures for our library so that students can listen to books and teachers can record monthly theme books. We would also like to replace our small fridge in our room that is 10+ years old and isn't working properly. That last thing we would like to ask for in funds is a new toy kitchen for our dramatic play. Our current one has been well loved and was used before gifting to us and is in need of replacement.	28
Melcher-Dallas Preschool	\$ 2,500.00	We would use it to purchase outdoor equipment for our preschool playground. There is not a lot there at this time.	30
Pella Christian Early Childhood Education	\$ 2,500.00	The grant funds will be used to provide STEM materials for students to use in the classrooms and also for indoor large motor play when weather prohibits outdoor play. The LED boards requested would be used for literacy instruction with our 4 year olds.	100
Little Dutch Academy	\$ 2,498.74	We would like to expand our classroom libraries for three teachers who are newer to early childhood. Additionally we would like to add text to our different centers, which is a goal for Creative Curriculum. This exposes kids to more literacy, even if they don't choose to play in the library center. (See more details on the attached PDF)	112
Grinnell Community Early Learning Center	\$ 2,500.00	We will use the funds to purchase new science materials for our preschool classrooms.	38
SHARE Preschool	\$ 2,500.00	SHARE Preschool will utilize the grant funds to enhance materials that support the five core areas of early learning development: social-emotional, physical, language and literacy, cognitive and approaches to learning. These materials will create engaging, developmentally appropriate learning centers that foster collaboration, communication, problem-solving, creativity, and self-regulation. SHARE Preschool continues to work towards improving our IQ4K score from a 3 to a 4. These materials will help equip our program to meet some of the IQ4K criteria.	57
PCM Preschool	\$ 2,000.00	Heavy Duty Tricycles for preschoolers to ride (4-6 of them)	60
Pleasantville Preschool	\$ -	Declined opportunity at this time.	
Colfax-Mingo Prescool			
UCC Preschool	\$ 2,427.80	We would utilize the grant funds to make some safety updates to our preschool. There are two areas that are high priority right now for safety. First is a shelf we use for block center. This shelf needs to be switched out with a new one due to the corners being broken/sharp. The second area is on the playground. We are required to have 6" of depth for rubber mulch under our climbing equipment. This needs to be refreshed asap, as our areas are much lower, one climbing area being basically down to the dirt.	38
<b>Total Requested</b>	<b>\$ 21,226.54</b>		

# Literacy Grants

Organization	Address1	CityStZip	RequestedAmt	GrantAmt	Program Name
Friends of Newton Public Library	PO Box 302	Newton, IA 50208	\$ 9,500.00	\$10,000	Books for Little Friends (DPIL Jasper)
Read 2 Lead	1298 E 142nd St South	Grinnell, IA 50112	\$ 5,000.00	\$4,000	Dolly Parton Imagination Library for Poweshiek County
Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Marion County, IA	PO Box 333	Konxville, IA 50138	\$ 6,500.00	\$7,000	Dolly Parton Imagination Library for Marion County (affiliate)
			\$ 21,000.00	\$0	

Total Allocated in Budget:

\$21,000.00 Amount to be available to fund  
\$21,000.00 Balance to be funded

**Monthly  
children served**

950

161

662

## Child Fairs and Awareness Events

Organization	Total Amount Requested	Please describe your event and this funding will support your goal (please include date of event(s), purpose of event, past successes, goal of the event, etc):	How many children will benefit from this grant?	How many families will participate in this event?
Four Oaks Family and Children's Services	\$2,500.00	Each year, Four Oaks, in partnership with Polk County-based nonprofit Foster Squad, additional nonprofits, and State of Iowa employees team up to ensure every child in foster care receives a gift during the holiday season. "Operation Santa" also welcomes families--whether biological, kinship, or foster families--to an event in their local community that celebrates their diversity. Funds will support this year's Operation Santa event in Grinnell, takes place on December 4, 2025. Funds will also support an appreciation event for Poweshiek County-area foster families.	81	30
Jasper County Health Department	\$2,000.00	The Jasper County Health Department, Newton Police Department, and the Pregnancy Center of Central Iowa will be hosting a Family Safety Event, primarily focusing on car seat safety. The event will be Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM at the Pregnancy Center. Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPST) will inspect car seats for damage, recalls, expiration dates, proper installation, and ensure that each child is in the appropriate seat based on height and weight guidelines. Car seats will be provided for families that need them. we will also educate families on car seat best practices and explain why these recommendations often exceed Iowa law's minimum requirements, offering greater protection for children. Families will receive educational materials and safety information from Blank Children's Hospital and the Iowa Department of Public Safety.	40	40