

**Minutes of the Pittsburgh/Allegheny County LICC
October 28, 2025**

Microsoft TEAMS Meeting

In Attendance

Emma Martin, PPS EI; Betsy Gamza, PPS EI; Emily Madigan, PPS EI; Becky Czekaj-Dangler, Early Learning Resources Center; Ashley Harland, Trying Together; Kelly Nee, Ashley Timko, PPS EI; Christine Yost, Alliance for Infants and Toddlers; Lauren Stuparitz, parent; Deanna Hiltz; RMU Outreach Specialist, Mary Evard, Lynn Cochran, Charlene Filsaime, Nikki Herman, parent; Stacey Trocheck, Jessica Chandler; Developmental Specialist, Kristen Churray, Diamond Davis, PPS EHS; Marsha Androsik, AIU; Megan Youngblood, Mirella Roman-Molina, Brooke Dorsch, Charise Ainsworth, Holy Family Institute; Phyllis Scott, Holy Family Institute; Kate Koontz, AIU-Head Start; Melissa Friend, AIU PEI; Loreleigh Elders, AIU PEI; Lissa Geiger Shulman, Prenatal to Three – Guest Speaker

Welcome and Introductions

Betsy Gamza welcomed everyone. Betsy also reviewed the LICC Mission Statement.

Charlene Filsaime accepted the minutes for September 9, 2025, and Lauren Stuparitz seconded the motion.

Committee Updates

Child Find Committee

Betsy Gamza reported.

We are planning to reach out to Allegheny County school districts to share EI information. We are in the process of gathering the contact person(s) at each school district and distributing the outreach efforts between team members.

Family/Professional Involvement

No report.

The Alliance

Stacey Trocheck reported.

Our intake department is now fully staffed and the options to enroll are to complete the referral form on our website or call in 412-885-6000. We are hiring Service Coordinators, both part-time and full-time. Our supervisors are also contacting families to discuss their satisfaction with their services. Any family has the option to request a new therapist or Service Coordinator if they are not the right fit.

Inclusion Committee

Marsha Androsik reported.

- Upcoming Conference Opportunity
 - o Includ(Ed): Early Childhood Disability Inclusion Conference
 - o Hosted by The Inclusion Collective – PGH
 - Jenna Hartman & Anna Lynch
 - o SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2025, 10:30 - 4:00 PM TEMPLE EMANUEL, 1250 BOWER HILL ROAD
 - o Betsy will invite them to our next Inclusion Committee meeting and the LICC meeting.
 - o Link to Registration [HERE](#)
- Inviting Brandi Binakonski to our next meeting. (Already sent and accepted)
bbinakonsky@pattan.net
- Betsy will follow up with Stacey Trocheck to see if anyone from AFIT would like to join the committee.
- Next Meeting:
 - o Wednesday, November 5, 2025, 1:00 PM on TEAMS (link sent)

Issues and Public Policy

Charlene Filsaime reported.

OCDEL announcements:

- **Supervision Announcement** (August 29, 2025) Now: Child care providers remain responsible for supervision until the child boards the school bus or enters the school building (unless a written agreement states otherwise). On the return side, supervision by the child care provider begins when the child exits the bus or enters the vehicle used for child care services. Any arrangements that allow unsupervised travel must be clearly documented in the child care agreement/handbook with caregiver signatures. For more info - <https://www.elrc5.alleghenycounty.us/news/ocdel-announces-update-on-children-being-picked-up-and-dropped-off-at-school>
- OCDEL Rapid Response Team Statement - (as a note - Becky (ELRC 5) is not on the full meeting so she won't be providing an update - we can share the info below):

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- OCDEL recently put out a statement regarding Rapid Response Team funding across Pennsylvania. Due to changes in federal funding, OCDEL will no longer be able to support the RRT initiative in the same capacity. Please note - In **Allegheny County, our Rapid Response Team is continuing to operate.** We are lucky to have support from local funders and other sources to keep this vital support available.

State budget Impasse & federal shut-down

- Ask folks - what are some of the impacts you're seeing in your programs?
- Canceling travel and conferences
- There is variability across different programs - but we know some programs (PreK Counts) are not receiving payments from the state. We also know there are some impacts to EI funding but payments are continuing through Allegheny County.
- Some programs/services are relying on on loans or reserve "rainy day" funds in their savings ...

Reminder that there is an election on Nov. 4th

- Share this link: <https://childrenfirstactionfund.org/2025-election-center/> - this site has info on mail-in ballot cut off dates, voter registration, and non-partisan voter resources

OCDEL Announces Update on Children Being Picked Up and Dropped Off at School — Early Learning Resource Center Region 5

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has released an announcement to update certified child care providers on rules regarding care and supervision when children are picked up ...

Training Committee

No report.

Transition Committee

No report.

Department Updates

A. Allegheny County Department of Health

No report.

B. Allegheny County Department of Human Services

- **Office of Behavioral Health**

No report.

- **Office of Developmental Supports (ODS)**

Mary Evrard reported.

Local Task Force (LTF) on the Right to Education

For families that are transitioning to school age this is a great opportunity to connect with other families, school personnel, and community partners!

I'm happy to usher in those interested. Both LTFs offer regular meetings during the school year and parent/caregiver hotlines.

LTF 3, Family, School, and Community Partners for Special Education, www.ltf3.org/.

LTF 2, www.pghschools.org/academics/pse-special-education/pse-special-education/pittsburgh-local-task-force-on-the-right-to-education

Resources for IEP / School concern supports

LTF 3, Family, School, and Community Partners for Special Education, www.ltf3.org/.

LTF 2, www.pghschools.org/academics/pse-special-education/pse-special-education/pittsburgh-local-task-force-on-the-right-to-education

Supports that may provide accompaniment to IEP / school meetings.

Achieva Advocacy at www.achieva.info/advocacy

Allegheny Family Network www.alleghenyfamilynetwork.org/

Ask helping professionals like a Service Coordinator or Supports Coordinator

Family support

Parent to Parent www.parenttoparent.org/

Information, newsletter, and learning/connection opportunities

RMU Trees Network www.rmu.edu/academics/provost/trees

PEAL Center (also learning opportunities) <https://pealcenter.org/>

www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Offices/Office-of-Developmental-Supports

Mary.Evrard@AlleghenyCounty.US

Updated eligibility requirements posted to the ODS webpage this month.

We are

happy to provide presentations for families and helping professionals.

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of

Developmental Supports (ODS) registers eligible Allegheny County residents with

- Intellectual Disability (ID)
- Autism
- Developmental Disability (DD) prior to age 9
- Medically Complex Condition (MCC) prior to age 22

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to connect them to Supports Coordination and other supports and services. Supports and services information and resources can be shared with all, regardless of eligibility. Refer to the Resource Lists under ODS Fact Sheets and Informational Documents below. You can also contact the [ODS Community Liaison](#) or call [412-253-1251](tel:412-253-1251). Interested in registering for Supports Coordination? Use the ODS intake and registration online portal on any internet connected device including a tablet or smart phone. Begin there by signing up for a password protected account. Learn more and access the portal on this [Frequently Asked Questions document](#). Reach an Intake Specialist at [412-253-1250](tel:412-253-1250).

To receive regular informational emails from ODS email the request to mevrard@alleghenycounty.us. Recent emails addressed SNAP / nutrition assistance and LIHEAP / utility assistance. If you want those sent to you please email Mary.

- **AFIT - Early Intervention Birth to 3**

No report.

- **CYF**

No report.

C. Pittsburgh Public Schools

- **Early Intervention, EHS, Head Start/EC Programs**

For PPS EI

Emily Madigan reported.

PPS EI will continue to take referrals in preparation for Child Count.

We will continue to support students in PPS sites and non-PPS sites who are facing challenging behaviors. We will provide them with resources and links to Rapid Response.

We continue to work on staffing issues.

For PPS EHS, Head Start/EC, Ashely Timko reported

EHS- the 45-day timeline for children enrolled at the beginning of the school year has passed, as well as our first assessment collection date. The insight gained from screenings and assessments has helped conversations with parents around referrals to the Alliance

for Infants and Toddlers. We are working in partnership with families and service coordinators to obtain IFSP's to help promote growth towards the child's goals.

EC- using the 45-day timeline for screenings to help collect baseline data and identify children who need extra supports. Working with EI staff to encourage growth and development in all domains and have begun to introduce embedded instruction with some service providers and classrooms to carry those skills across all routines and environments.

D. AIU

- **Preschool Early Intervention(PEI)/Head Start**

AIU/Preschool Early Intervention Program

Reported by Marsha Androsik

- Prior focus in past years – challenging behaviors in childcare centers
 - o Hypothesis – Teachers in childcare centers may have had less opportunities for training around challenging behaviors.
- AIU and PPS are both experiencing more challenging behaviors in recent years.
 - o Discussion regarding possible causes (ex. “screen time” at home as a behavior management strategy, COVID babies, lack of parent training)
- An invitation to join the LICC Inclusion Committee will be sent to Deysi Keegan, Rapid Response Team Assistant Director, Trying Together
 - o Can we offer a parent training around the topic “reducing screen time”?
- Embedded Instruction initiative from OCDEL
 - o PPS and AIU are currently in the implementation stages of Embedded Instruction.
 - o Do other local Early Childhood, Early Intervention and Inclusion organizations know about Embedded Instruction?
 - o How can we support this?

- **AIU/Head Start**

Kate Koontz reported.

AIU Early Childhood Education (includes Headstart and PreK Counts) is working on Pyramid Model Implementation and are in our 2nd year of "The All Learners Cohorts" of staff in multiple roles, moving through the path of intensive trainings to increase competency and confidence in using the skills. Part of the training includes work with interpreting IEPs, special needs, and sensory accommodations for all students.

E. COTRAIC

- **Head Start/Early Head Start**

Kristen Churray reported.

I shared that we are in the midst of new enrollment and 45-day screenings. We recently purchased Frog Street curriculum to pilot in our classrooms and home visiting program. We have trainings scheduled and will begin the transition at the start of the new year. We currently have some openings in 2 of our programs, home visiting and with our childcare partners.

F. OCD Early Head Start

No report.

G. SICC

Lauren Stuparitz reported.

[State Interagency Coordinating Council - Early Intervention Technical Assistance Portal](#) next SICC meeting is Dec 4. You can get the meeting login link by emailing the address below. Public, professionals, and families welcome.

All meetings will be held from 12:30-3:00 pm, unless noted on the agenda for the meeting. All meetings will be held virtually via Zoom until further notice. If you have any questions, please contact ra-pwsicc@pa.gov

H. EITA

No report.

I. Early Learning Resources Center

Becky Czekaj-Dengler reported.

The ELRC Region 5 completed our Annual Coat Drive providing 548 coats to over 185 families!

Please visit our website for news stories on the impact of the budget impasse on SNAP & LIHEAP Funding: [Early Learning Resource Center Region 5](#)

The ELRC 5 Downtown location on Wood Street continues to serve as a Diaper Bank and Formula Bank. Please direct families to us who may be visiting downtown Pittsburgh and have an emergency need for diapers or formula. We currently have Nutramigen and Neosure. It is recommended that families call before they come down to confirm that we have the specific formula or size of diaper needed - 412-350-3577.

J. **Trying Together**

Reported by Ashley Harland.

The state budget impasse continues and the impacts on early learning programs, children, and families are significant. Complete this quick e-mail action alert to encourage your state legislators to pass a budget that prioritizes early care and education and families: <https://tryingtogether.org/advocacy/current-issue/>

Trying Together is hosting Office Hours to support licensed ECE programs as they complete the Market Rate Survey. Every three years, the Market Rate Survey helps the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) to set child care subsidy payment rates that are reflective of the private pay market. Sign-up for office hours and learn more [here](#).

Save The Date for Trying Together's UnConference: Kindergarten Transition! The next UnConference takes place on Monday 2/16/26 at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. Registration opens soon. You can access the Save the Date flyer [here](#).

Share Out

Deanna Hiltz reported.

Monday, November 3, 2025 from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Cindy Duch, Parent Training and Information (PTI) Project Director for Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center is joining us to help us examine what an accessible education environment looks like and will share tips on advocating for the supports appropriate to create the Least Restrictive Environment. There will be ample time for Q&A. Anyone interested in learning more can register for the meeting by contacting Vicki Donne at donne@rmu.edu or Deanna Hiltz at hiltzd@rmu.edu or registering at <https://forms.gle/89PjxMBVSpaxAaSv9>

Monday, November 10, 2025 from 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM. Bekah Nesbitt, an Assistive Technology Coordinator for TechOWL, PA's Assistive Technology Act Program, will be joining us to describe assistive technology (AT), how AT helps individuals with

disabilities, and how Apple Accessibility can be applied across disabilities. To register for this free family/parent workshop, please contact Vicki Donne at donne@rmu.edu or Deanna Hiltz at hiltzd@rmu.edu, or register at (<https://forms.gle/CMzEm7KngKyF4asa6>).

Lauren Stuparitz reported.

Websites for the Local Task Forces 2 and 3 below.

The free hybrid event is on Nov 5 at AIU Waterfront. Flyer on LTF3 website. All are welcome, including the public and PPS IU2 folks.

[Home | Local Task Force 3](#)

parents welcome including transition to k parents in Allegheny County.

[Pittsburgh Local Task Force on the Right to Education LTF 2 | Pittsburgh PA | Facebook](#)

next meeting virtual. 6-8pm on Nov 13. parents welcome including transition to Kindergarten parents.

Parents Rights for Children in EI resources:

[Procedural Safeguards Notice - Office for Dispute Resolution](#)

ConsultLine is a toll-free information help line for families and advocates of children with disabilities who have questions or concerns about the education of a school-aged child. ConsultLine specialists answer questions and provide information about special education, gifted education, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. **ConsultLine specialists answer questions on dispute resolution options for early intervention and school-aged children.**

If the call is regarding early intervention concerns and formal complaints, then can call: [717-346-9320](tel:717-346-9320).

[Contact ConsultLine - Office for Dispute Resolution](#)

[The Special Education ConsultLine](#) pdf brochure

[PaTTAN - Early Intervention Complaint Form](#) download from pattan

The Early Intervention Complaint Form for Infant Toddler and Preschool is a form that parents can complete to request a formal complaint through the Bureau of Early Intervention Services.

Follow up to clarify now that Allegheny County OBH Educational Advocates have been removed:

[Education-Advocacy-Orgs-and-Resources-.pdf](#)

[Fact Sheets | Education Law Center](#) link to ELC Pa fact sheets. some specifically for EI and Early Childhood/preschool. Useful for families.

[Your Child's Right to Be Free from Discrimination in Preschool:](#)

[Right-to-be-Free-from-Discrimination-in-Preschool-2025.pdf](#)

This fact sheet provides information for caregivers, as well as early childhood education (ECE) administrators, staff, and other stakeholders, regarding ways

to eliminate discrimination in preschools, including discriminatory suspensions and expulsions. You can also find information on protections against discrimination under federal and state law, including antidiscrimination laws and licensing requirements that apply to preschool programs in Pennsylvania and specific programs and protections for children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and those in foster care.

[ECCS Prenatal to Three Project | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#)

Questions about the strategic plan, or its implementation, can be sent to rapweccs@pa.gov.

This is the statewide system related to Lissa Geiger Shulman's local work with the Allegheny Prenatal to Three Systems. Parent participation is a part of their strategic plan at the state level.

Reported back from Oct 18 Know Your Rights workshop. Some concerns families had about their kids' 504s and IEPs in Pittsburgh IU as well as AIU schools. Feedback was parents need support understanding their rights and advocating for their students. Helpful resource: Education Rights Network Parent Hotline. online intake below.

[ERN Parent Hotline Form](#)

Mirella Roman-Molina reported.

P2P Café Flyer and Annual report attachments shared.

New Business

January 27, 2026 Meeting will be on Microsoft TEAMS

Charise Ainsworth adjourned the meeting. Stacey Trocheck seconded the motion.

Minutes submitted by Emma Martin, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Early Intervention Program.