



Lorain County Children and Families First Council Full Council Meeting

April 23, 2026

Attendees:

- Chelsea Freeman-Yates
- Franco Gallo
- Stacy Poling
- Dan Haight
- Amber Fisher
- Michael Doud
- Kristen Fox-Berki
- Shauna Matelski
- Isaac Young
- Rick Soto
- Emily Kirsch
- Chris Cabot
- Billie Olsen
- Valerie Gonzalez
- Elizabeth Chupa
- Taylor Austin
- Guest – Aimee Matusik
- Guest – Jon Paul Filipkowski
- Guest – Alexandra Johnson

Opening:

- ❖ The Full Council Meeting of the Lorain County Children and Families First Council was called to order at 9:00 am on April 23, 2026, in Elyria by Franco Gallo.

Welcome and Introductions:

- ❖ Franco Gallo welcomed everyone, and Introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Minutes:

- ❖ Franco Gallo asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the previous Full Council meeting on November 6th, 2025. Rick Soto motioned to approve, and Kirsten Fox-Berki seconded.
- ❖ The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

Open Business:

- ❖ Early Intervention
 - Isaac Young shared that they have had 808 total referrals, which is a decrease from 819 last year.
 - 72% of children are under 2 years old- almost to goal of 80%
 - Highest referral source is family and family friends
 - Fully staffed- 9 service coordinators and 3 evaluators
 - Amherst and Lorain School Districts are putting up QR codes at playgrounds for EI
- ❖ Current Program Update
 - Data Committee information provided by Jon Paul Filipkowski
 - Currently serving 68 youth
 - 49 active cases
 - 19 pending cases



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April 23, 2026

- Caseloads per service coordinator
 - ◆ Chelsea – 6 cases
 - ◆ Jon – 9 cases
 - ◆ Kristen – 20 cases
 - ◆ Denise – 20 cases
 - ◆ Jesse – 13 cases
- Higher than usual caseloads
 - 15-25% wraparound
 - 75% service coordination
- Current wait for service is 28 days
 - This is lower than in the past. January and February 2026 the wait was 120 days.
- Current waitlist is 3
- OhioRISE Partnership
 - 20-25% of cases are also involved in OhioRISE
- Observations since 2025
 - 35 cases received referrals but we were not able to open case
 - 15 no contact
 - 12 denial of service
 - 6 OhioRISE
 - 5 no longer in county
 - Analyzed referral source
 - Children Services had 13 referrals that were not opened. Chelsea Freeman-Yates has worked with Children Service to educate on when it's appropriate for referrals and how to make sure referrals are complete.
 - We changed the referral process to reflect that the family will know a referral was put in so they are not surprised when we contact them
 - Chelsea Freeman-Yates educated school districts on LCCFFC vs. OhioRISE in hopes that families can make informed decisions.
- ❖ Old Business
 - Shared Plan
 - Address Lorain County youth in congregate care
 - Respite Work Group- 4C Leading
 - ◆ Strong Families Safe Communities Grant- Submitted in collaboration w/ Summit and Geauga Counties \$75,000.00. Awardees will find out late May
 - ◆ Lorain County Care Connection- Respite Program. We will provide a list of providers or recruit new qualified providers. Rolling out in the Fall 2026.
 - Youth and Family Collab Update
 - ◆ 22 referrals
 - ◆ Chelsea presented at the Ohio Children Alliance's Annual Spring Conference on April 21st and 22nd.
 - Prevention Initiatives
 - ◆ Denise Henry is the Family Support Specialist, working with families that need assistance, not necessarily just the youth.



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April 23, 2026

- ◆ Increase parent/guardian supportive services- increase peer support/ parent mentoring within LC CFFC
- ◆ Build relationships with higher level of care- ISP/4C and LCCFFC planning site visits starting Late Summer*
- Address infant vitality within Lorain County
 - Ohio Start Collaboration- w/LCCS
 - Continue Supporting County Partners in current program/ refer and promote
 - ◆ Infant Home Visit Program- LCPH
 - ◆ Littlest Lorain County Bundle Initiative
 - Every baby born in the county will eventually receive onesie with future school district logo on front and our logo on the back and a folder with postnatal and early childhood resources. We were struggling with getting access to addresses to new families. This is starting with Oberlin and Lorain. The Lorain County Commissioners want to be part of it.
 - We have begun planning prenatal education events for FSY27
 - Partner with a local fire departments to help assist/ promote with car seat and crib safety checks
 - ◆ We are looking into bringing a train the trainer to Lorain County so that we can get more people trained
 - Rick Soto suggested reaching out to Lorain County Health and Lorain Police Department to see about trainings
 - Dan Haight mentioned local Rotary Clubs might be interested in sponsoring
 - ◆ Crib safety checks will loop back to infant home visit program for all newborns
 - Continue child find efforts for EI
 - ◆ We asked school districts to reach out with additional information if children are missed so we can find similarities to target these families.
 - ◆ Library partnership bags- We are working to have bags made up with development milestone information
- Address Services and Supports for Multi-System Youth in Lorain County
 - Kids Summit
 - ◆ We will not be doing an annual Kids Summit. We want to focus on the outcome to promote change.
 - ◆ Lorain Cares Group shared plan is currently being updated. They have talked about creating an app for professionals to know waitlist and grassroots.
 - Lorain County No Wrong Door
 - ◆ On hold- next meeting we will be working on rolling out within our county
 - Avon Lake Police Department/ Lorain Police Department
 - ◆ Holding professional developments for those departments
 - ◆ Avon Lake Police Department reached out to create Sensory Kits for all of their cruisers and want to be trained in using those kits.
 - ◆ We will be tabling at the Lorain Police Kids Summit, which will be held May 30th, 2026
- Address School Readiness for all ages within Lorain County



Lorain County Children and Families First Council Full Council Meeting

April 23, 2026

- Lorain Early Learning Initiative- check issued
- Truancy Work Group- work is on hold. We will be resuming in Fall 2026
- Lorain Cares; partnership with LC ESC, MHARS
 - Child Services will be partnering. We will be focusing on Kids Summit Initiatives/ follow up
- Outreach and Community Events
 - LC CFFC annual family event
 - Our Ensure They Shine event will be held 04/25/2026 from 11am-2pm at the North Park Ice Rink in Elyria. We were awarded the Family Fun Day Event request for \$10,000 funding through OCTF.
 - We will be attending the Elyria Memorial Day Parade on May 25th, 2026 and partnering with Lorain County Transit
 - We will be tabling at the Lorain Police Kids Summit on May 30th, 2026
- Youth Leadership Council
 - Lorain County Urban League- pending MOU/CONTRACT
 - \$7,812.50 Youth Leadership Funds
 - Once monthly meetings
 - Actively recruiting 13-18 y/o
- LC CFFC Shared Plan Mini Grant \$5000
 - Awardees are:
 - Wellington City Schools- Truancy/ PBIS (Wellington Specific)-paid
 - Childcare Resource Center- Conscious Discipline (County)-paid
 - Avon Lake City Schools- Truancy (Avon Lake)- waiting for invoice still
 - Oberlin Kids- Early Childhood (Oberlin Specific)-paid
 - Lorain City Schools (pending)
 - There will be no grant cycle for 2026/2027. We will be reviewing data to improve the grant process. We are expecting a new cycle in 2027/2028
- ❖ Committee Reports
 - Finance as of 04/17/2026
 - Stacy Poling is working to get our new QuickBooks set up and will be focusing on current fiscal year and forward. Kathy Robinson will be helping with last 2 years to enter in all information lost. We use Oracle but are having IT issues and are unable to login to get current information.
 - Program, Data and Evaluation- no formal meeting held this quarter
 - Early Childhood Committee met on 03/17/2026. The Lorain County Littlest Bundle is the focus as well as early intervention.
- ❖ New Business
 - Family Rep Applications
 - The 3 year cycle will be ending. Billie Olsen and Val Gonzalez are able to fill out another application if interested in renewing their positions. Melissa Chernock does not plan to renew, so we will be looking to fill her position.
 - LC CFFC Staffing Changes



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April 23, 2026

- The Administrative Assistant role has changed to Administrative Operations Manager, this was filled by Taylor Austin. The Fiscal Manager role has changed to Fiscal Officer, this has been filled by Stacy Poling. Jon Paul Filipkowski announced that he will be moving to Europe in July. The Family Service Coordinator Manager position will not be filled. We are looking to change to a Lead Service Coordinator and reassess current employees' roles.

Board and Guest Comments:

- ❖ Amber Fisher shared that Issue 11 on the ballot on May 5th, 2026, is for the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities to fund Murray Ridge School. Murray Ridge School will close if the levy is not passed. There could also be further early intervention cuts.

Next Meeting:

- ❖ The meeting dates for Fiscal Year 2027 are scheduled for July 16th, 2026 @ 9:00am, October 15th, 2026 @ 9:00am, January 21st, 2027, April 15th, 2027 @ 9:00am.

Adjournment:

- ❖ Franco Gallo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Dan Haight and Billie Olsen. Meeting adjourned at 10:14 am by Franco Gallo.

Minutes submitted by: Taylor Austin