

## Wyoming Forms Early Childhood State Advisory Council

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**Governor Dave Freudenthal announced the appointments of the members of the Wyoming Early Childhood State Advisory Council, which he created by Executive Order.**

The Council will work to strengthen the early childhood system through greater coordination and collaboration among public and private early childhood care and education programs and services in Wyoming.

Its first task will be to conduct a statewide needs assessment of the quality and availability of early childhood programs and services.

"I am convinced that investing in early childhood is one of the best investments we can make for the future of the state and its children and families," Gov. Freudenthal said "I am confident that every person on this Council will do their best to guide thoughtful and creative solutions to address our children's needs," he said.

The Governor will speak at the Council's inaugural meeting on Friday, August 20, at 9 a.m. in Cheyenne at the Holiday Inn.

Council members, who come from all over Wyoming, represent numerous state agencies, organizations, occupations and experiences.

**State representation from the Departments of Family Services, Education, Workforce Services, Health, Governor's Office and the University of Wyoming, include:**

- Sue Bacon, family services administrator, DFS-Early Childhood Division
- Anita Sullivan, education consultant, Wyoming Department of Education Early Childhood Development
- Peg Brown-Clark, unit director, WDE Special Programs
- Tobi Wickam, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services business training and outreach administrator
- Chris Newman, administrator, Wyoming Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division
- Eydie Trautwein, WDH Mental Health & Substance Abuse Division interagency coordinator
- Meredith Asay, policy advisor to Gov. Freudenthal
- Michelle Buchanan, University of Wyoming associate professor, Elementary and Early Childhood Education

The Council also includes representatives from local education agencies, community colleges, licensed child care, local child development services, the Head Start Association, the Head Start Collaboration, Wyoming Early Childhood Partnership, community health services, and a private foundation with focus on early childhood.

**These individuals include:**

- Susan Bodar of Dubois, a kindergarten teacher
- Karla Leach of Rock Springs, president of Western Wyoming Community College
- Kendra West of Evanston, executive director of the Evanston Children's Development Center and the Mountain View Children's Learning Center
- Jane Rhoades, executive director of Weston County Children's Center/Region III Developmental Services
- LaNelle Martin of Lingle, executive director for Wyoming Head Start Association
- Rick Hufnagel of Laramie, director of the Wyoming Head Start Collaboration Office
- Becca Freeburn of Cheyenne, executive director of the Wyoming Early Childhood Partnership
- Karen Meyer, R.N., of Lander, Maternal Child Health/Nurse Family Partnership regional coordinator
- Mary Garland of Laramie, representing the John P. Ellbogen Foundation

**Representatives in early childhood advocacy, parenting young children, and legal advocacy for children include:**

- Deanna Frey of Cheyenne, executive director, Wyoming Children's Action Alliance
- Tiffany Eskelson-Maestas of Rock Springs, outreach program manager for the Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and mother of two young children
- Stacey Obrecht of Cheyenne, attorney director of the Wyoming Guardians Ad Litem Program

Additional representation comes from individuals interested in early care and education or working with young children and their families.

**These council members are:**

- Dianna Webb of Casper, executive director of the Apple Tree Learning Center
- Noamie Niemitalo of Gillette, manager of Campbell County Memorial Hospital Early Childhood Center
- Cathy Lance of Riverton, Child Development Specialist

There will also be representatives from the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, the Northern Arapaho Tribe and the Wyoming Legislature, although those positions have not yet been appointed.

The Council will annually submit, to the governor, a statewide strategic report addressing its activities.

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