

MINUTES
HOUSE EARLY CHILDHOOD PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF EDUCATION
Monday, August 17, 2026
1:00 PM
Room A, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Representatives Denise Garner, Chair; Karilyn Brown, Vice Chair; Julie Mayberry, Stetson Painter, DeAnn Vaught, and Keith Brooks, ex officio

Other members present: Senators Kim Hammer, Blake Johnson, and Fredrick J. Love; Representatives Lincoln Barnett, Howard M. Beaty, Jr., Nick Burkes, Rebecca Burkes, Joey L. Carr, Paul Childress, Cameron Cooper, Denise Ennett, Jon S. Eubanks, Kenneth B. Ferguson, RJ Hawk, Roger Lynch, Tippi McCullough, Mark D. McElroy, Jessie McGruder, Jason Nazarenko, Tara Shephard, Joy Springer, and Tracy Steele

Representative Garner called the meeting to order.

Consideration of a Motion to Approve the June 17, 2026, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit B]
Without objection, the minutes were approved.

Update on Early Childhood Education from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) [Handout C]
Ashelyn Abney, Education Division Director, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), ADE, and Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner, DESE, ADE provided updates from the Office of Early Childhood including early childhood education funding streams and data regarding licensed providers in Arkansas.

Presentation of Early Childhood Initiative at ForwARd Arkansas [Exhibit D]
Jamie Rayford, Executive Director, Center for Early Learning Solutions, ForwARd Arkansas presented information regarding the Center for Early Learning Solutions at ForwARd Arkansas.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.