

The Coordinated Application, Eligibility and Enrollment (CAEE) Workgroup is a Preschool Development Grant-funded initiative. The concept for the workgroup was formulated in early 2021, prior to HB 21-1304, and stemmed from Program Quality and Alignment subcommittee feedback that the state should play a larger role in ensuring the availability of coordinated application, eligibility and enrollment processes in early childhood.

The CAEE workgroup was formed to:

Explore how Colorado might structure a Coordinated Application, Eligibility and Enrollment process in the early care and education space for programs like CCCAP, Head Start, CPP, and UPK.

The workgroup membership includes various stakeholders that would be impacted by such a model, including:

- Parents
- Community-based child care centers and family child care homes
- Head Start programs and state Head Start Collaboration Office
- Denver Preschool Program
- School district preschool representatives - urban and mountain resort
- County and state CCCAP staff
- Regional Preschool Specialists CDE P-3 Office
- Governor's office
- OEC staff
- Rural, urban, and mountain resort Early Childhood Councils
- Non-profit organizations
- Advocates

The CAEE workgroup met for **15 hours** over **10 meetings** from July to November 2021 to explore this purpose. They were guided in conversation by the PDG B-5 Technical Assistance center who brought various state and local models of coordination from around the country for consideration. Recognizing that similar conversations were happening as part of the transition process, to add to the laboratory of ideas around these concepts, the CAEE workgroup decided to try on a fully coordinated enrollment system as part of the model. The following proposal represents the group's thinking up to this point. Additional meetings will be held in December to further refine the content that follows.

Mixed Delivery= A system of early care and education services that are delivered through a combination of programs, providers, and settings, such as Head Start, licensed family and center-based child care programs, public schools, and other community-based organizations, that is supported by a combination of public and private funds.

HELPFUL ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS:

CAEE= Coordinated Application, Eligibility, & Enrollment

CCCAP= Colorado Child Care Assistance Program

CCR&R= Child Care Resource & Referral

CDE= Colorado Department of Education

CPP= Colorado Preschool Program

ECC= Early Childhood Council

FTE= Full Time Equivalent

HB= House Bill

OEC= Office of Early Childhood

PDG= Preschool Development Grant

UPK= Universal Pre-kindergarten

Coordinated Application, Eligibility, and Enrollment Workgroup Recommendations

The primary purpose of Coordinated Application, Eligibility, and Enrollment (CAEE) is to ease family's access and experience accessing early childhood programs for their child in the state of Colorado.

1

CAEE should include children birth to 5

Coordinated processes should be accessible and consistent for families of all children prior to school-entry.

Additional clarification and support would be needed for families with children in both the birth through five and school-aged category in accessing CCCAP.

2

CAEE should include all public funding/public programs in the birth to 5 space

Including: CCCAP, CPP, UPK, all Head Start program options, and Locally-funded Preschool (school district and/or tuition-based). CAEE should also determine current or desired connection to Part C and/or B services, while respecting their separate eligibility processes.

CAEE must inform families up front about the programs so they know what they are likely eligible for and that not all are available statewide (i.e. Head Start).

3

A CAEE system should be overseen by Early Childhood Councils

ECCs are the best candidate to coordinate and implement a CAEE system because they already partner with all the involved entities in the local birth to 5 mixed delivery system (i.e. school districts, public and private providers); most do not directly run early learning programs so there will not be a perception of bias when considering enrollment; and they can tailor the process to meet local need.

ECCs can only fulfill this function IF there is additional, sufficient, and sustainable training, funding and technical support from the state Department of Early Childhood for FTE to do this work. There must be reasonable adjustments made to the model in rural areas so it works for their communities.

4

The CAEE process should include a mix of state and ECC-led local network decisions

State: application period coordination; guidance on marketing strategies; incorporation of other state systems (CO Shines); priority categories for matching families to openings with family and local review and (maybe) adaptation; eligibility determination and matching timeline/deadlines
Local: marketing of process and programs; input into priority categories for matching; local plan including involved providers, open slot determination, eligibility determination process, matching process, etc.

Must balance desire for consistency in the event families move, with flexibility to meet the unique needs of local families, providers, and programs.

Common Application- State Level with Local Customization

- Single point of entry, whether virtual (computer or phone) or onsite for families without internet.
- One application for all public funding/ public programs birth to five developed by the state, but customizable by the ECC-led network to reflect local offerings.
- Accessible to families in their home language and easy to understand.
- Utilizes family or child profiles to help with record matching across programs.
- Available connection to a human being (e.g., a navigator) via chat, in-person, etc., utilizing existing roles where possible to reduce costs.

Deeper Dive

Starts with income, children's ages, and eligibility factor information to use skip logic for programs for which they may be eligible. Obtains families' needed schedule, location and other information on priority categories. Families advised about funding/programs for which they may qualify. System moves to questions necessary for a full application to those public funding streams/programs. Collects required documentation. Inquires about existing connections to or desired connections to Part C and/or Part B services.

Coordinated Eligibility- Local Level

- The ECC-led network determines eligibility for all public funding /programs according to their established process. This is done locally because the process includes local programs and some programs' criteria differs locally.

Deeper Dive

The ECC convenes the licensed public and private providers in the mixed delivery system (family child care homes, centers, and school-based) that offer Head Start programs, CPP, UPK, locally-funded preschool, and CCCAP into a network to inform the local plan and processes. ECCs can consider if they would want to approach this regionally if it makes sense.

Coordinated Enrollment- Local Level

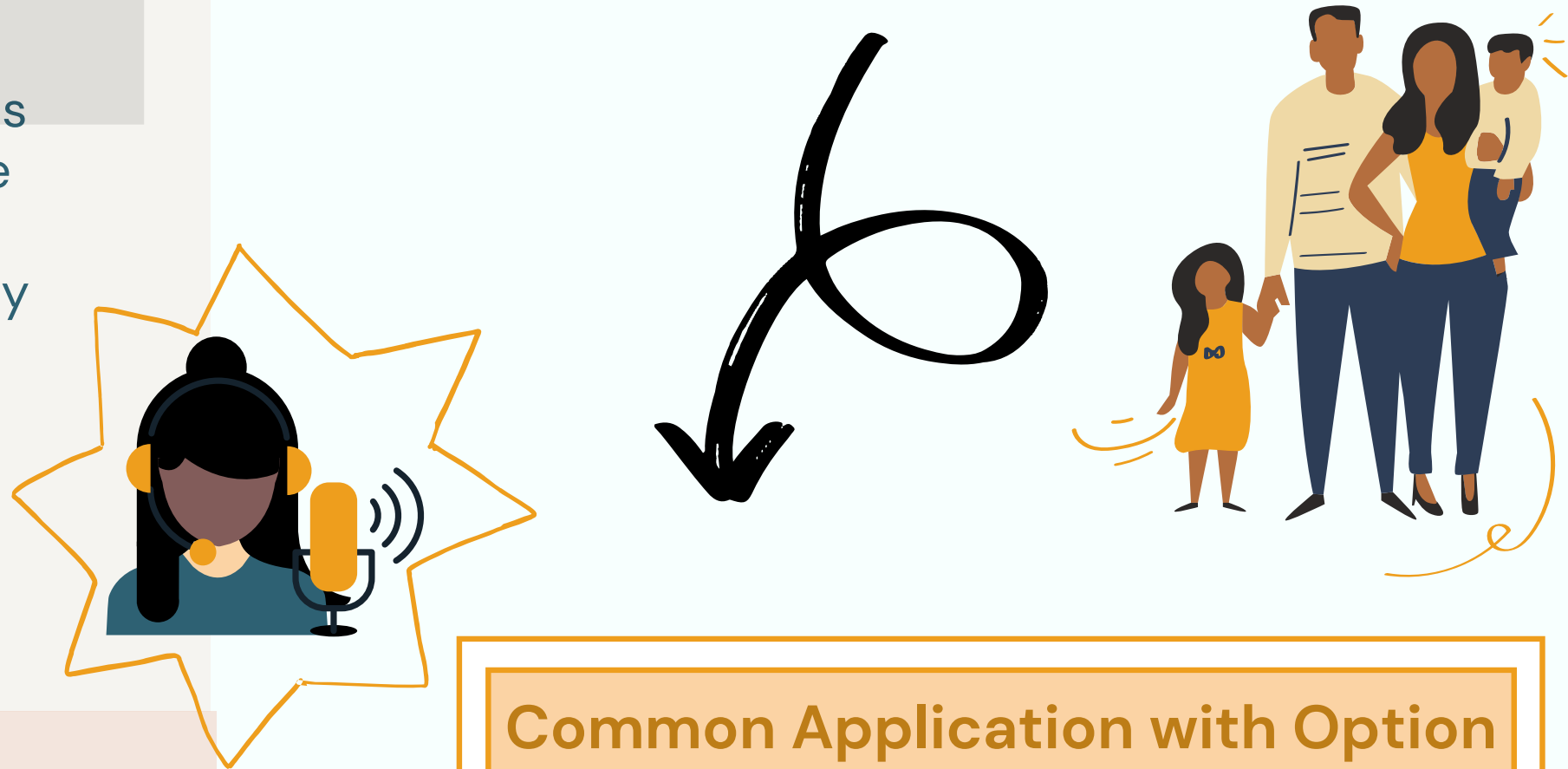
- Based on the eligibility determination, the ECC-led network sends the family a list of programs with an opening that take their funding and meet their needs for ranking by the family.
- The ECC-led network matches the family with a provider according to the locally determined process.

Deeper Dive

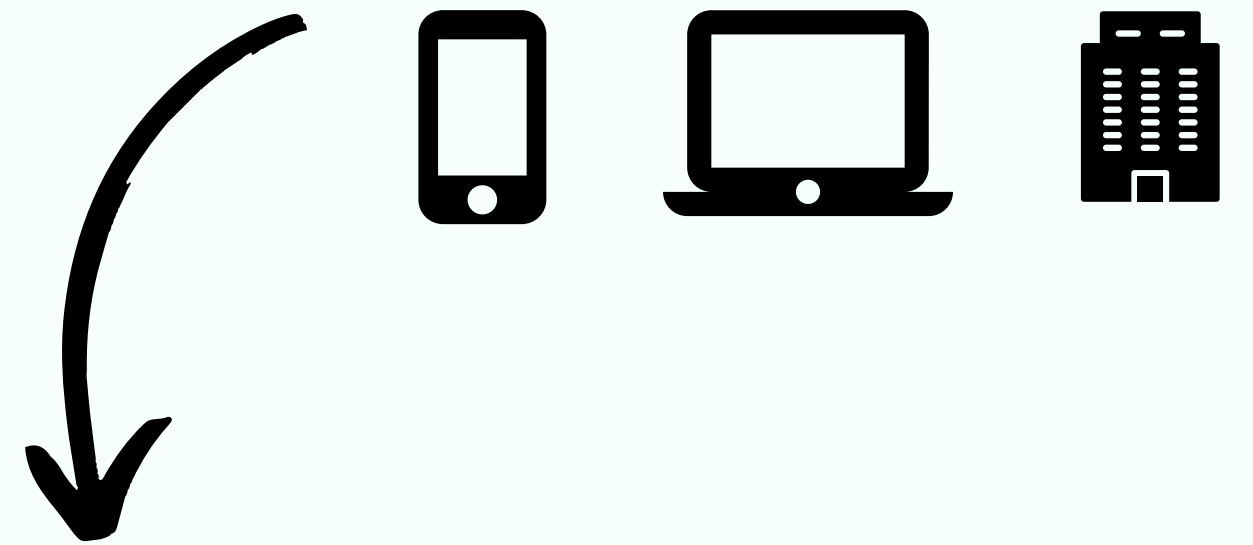
To ensure that matching is equitable, this model imagines the following: more publicly-funded, slot-based programs are developed for children ages 0-3; CCCAP functions more like a slot-based program; for programs with an application period, those periods are aligned and a process is developed for off-cycle applications; for programs without an application period (i.e. CCCAP), coordinated enrollment happens year-round; blending of funding is encouraged and supported to avoid segregated classrooms or programs; there is a minimum expectation of acceptable quality for providers accepting public funding or participating in public programs.

CAEE PROCESS

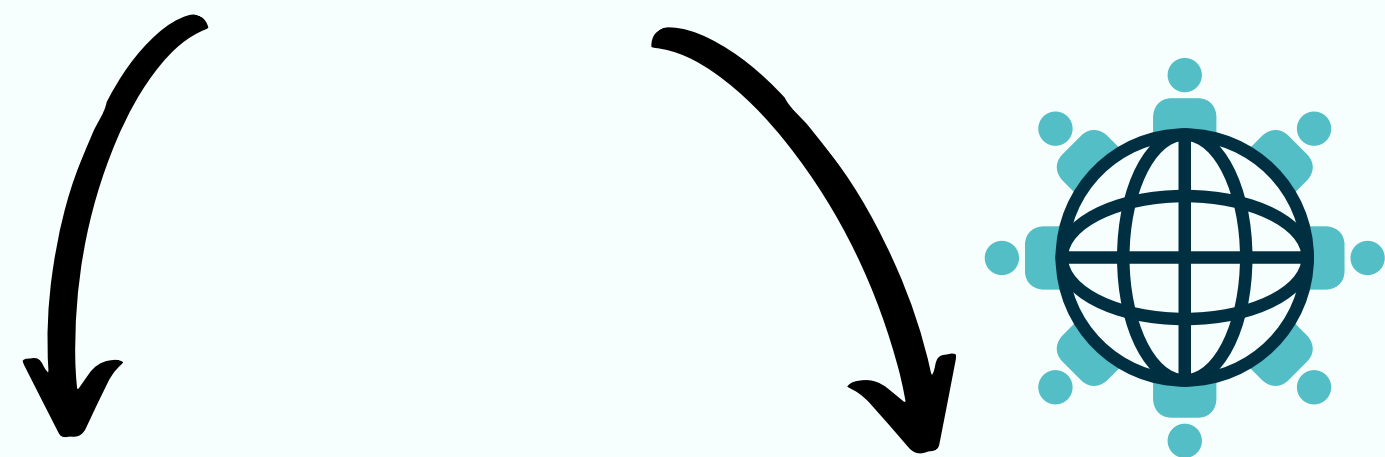
ALL FAMILIES searching for early care and learning options for ages birth through five



Common Application with Option for Live Navigator Assistance



Coordinated Eligibility Determination

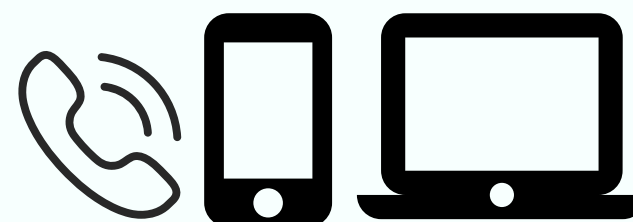


Family is NOT eligible for any public funding/public program

CCR&R and Colorado Shines Website for support finding a program with an opening that meets their schedule needs

Family is eligible for any public funding/public program

Coordinated Enrollment Process



CAEE Timeline & Considerations

NOTE: This timeline should be adjusted based on the recommendations for the universal preschool program.



1

DATA SYSTEM DEVELOPED

The state works to develop an online system for full CAEE. Needs assessments should be conducted to address rural child care deserts.

2

TRAINING ON DATA SYSTEM

ECCs that are selected for the pilot are trained on how to use the data system in order to implement the soft rollout.

3

"SOFT ROLLOUT" PILOT

A selection of ECCs (both rural and urban represented) pilot CAEE to give a full nine months-one year to test the system before full rollout in 2023.

4

FEEDBACK FROM PILOT RECEIVED; ADJUSTMENTS TO CAEE PROCESS MADE

Feedback is procured from all involved stakeholders, adjustments to the system are made.

5

STATEWIDE TRAINING ON DATA SYSTEM

All ECCs are trained on how to use the data system in order to implement full rollout.

6

FULL ROLLOUT OF CAEE

Full Coordinated Application, Eligibility, and Enrollment is in place before the launch of Universal Pre-K in 2023.

This workgroup and resource are responsive to [Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan 1.2.1](#)

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