



Early Childhood Leadership Commission October 26, 2022, 2023 ~ 9:00am - 12:00pm

MINUTES

Meeting Objectives:

- Determine how ECLC can support UPK in alignment with our Strategic Plan
- Learn about ways to provide feedback and support the creation of the Statewide Strategic Plan
- Learn about the current efforts at state agencies and consider opportunities for alignment
- Understand the decision-making strategy used to examine CDEC's stimulus funding
- Learn how to provide feedback on the Statewide Comprehensive Workforce Plan
- Hear about the progress on the Home Visiting Task Force report and determine how the ECLC can support this work
- Hear comments from the Early Childhood Community
- Advance the goals of the [ECLC Strategic Plan](#)

Attendees: Adeeb Khan, Floyd Cobb, Glenn Robinson, Heather Craiglow, Jasmin Ramirez, Jeanne McQueeney, Lisa Roy, Lucinda Burns, Maria Tarajano Rodman, Pamela Harris, Sue Renner, Susan Steele, Whitney LeBoeuf, Rachel Hutson, Nicole Riehl, Robert Werthwein, Sam Fogleman, Tammi Hiler

Welcome and Introductions

Adeeb Khan called the meeting to order at 9:05. He welcomed Sam Fogleman, the new ECLC representative from the Colorado Department of Higher Education. Commissioners introduced themselves. Adeeb also announced he has accepted a position as the Director of Economic Development for the City and County of Denver.

Pamela Harris motioned to approve the minutes as drafted, Jasmin Ramirez seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

ECLC Strategic Plan + ECLC's Role in Supporting Universal Preschool

Adeeb shared the ECLC 10-Year Strategic Plan, and reminded everyone of the focus areas, strategies and results outlined by the Commission. He noted that while the ECLC does not administer the programs and services, the Commission has a role to play in ensuring that the intent of the programs and services are met and ensuring accountability, strategic dialogue and continuous improvement across the early childhood system. Universal Preschool is one of the major programs being rolled out at this time, and the ECLC can have a significant impact in supporting the identification of concerns, prioritizing issues to be addressed, and suggesting solutions.

Susan Steele reminded everyone that the Commission has 3 Subcommittees that are aligned with the result areas in the 10-Year Strategic Plan; given the expertise at the Subcommittees, she suggested that much of the work to advance the Strategic Plan could be done through the Subcommittees and Working Groups. She encouraged the Commission to consider how to ensure the structure of the ECLC and Subcommittees is reflective of the work needed to advance the Strategic Plan.

Sue Renner also elevated the possibility of developing additional platforms or structures that support the Commission. This could include updating the infrastructure or adding additional groups or task forces.

The Commissioners discussed the desire to be more involved in policy making and ensure there are appropriate feedback loops. They also discussed the existing opportunities for engagement, such as the Rules Advisory Council and County Subcommittee of the Rules Advisory Council, and how to ensure feedback is routed to the appropriate venues.

Putting Data into Context: Innovation, Investments, and Impact. Evidence-Based Decision-Making at CDEC

Mary Alice Cohen introduced a conversation on the evidence-based decision making process that CDEC utilized in order to understand and identify priorities and drive innovation, investments, and impact. A major challenge identified by CDEC was that a significant influx of federal stimulus funds supported programs across the department; with the end of this funding, the department needed to develop and activate a sustainability approach to guide the agency in determining which initiatives should be sustained and how.

Whitney LeBoeuf provided an overview of the process utilized to evaluate the activities, which incorporated a massive coordination effort to reduce duplicative outreach to programs and providers and ensure robust information.

Kristin Klopfenstein reviewed the Evidence-Based Decision-Making framework that was utilized in this work; it included utilizing the best available research evidence, accessing decision-maker expertise, and understanding community needs & implementation context. This resulted in two concrete products in coordination with CDEC: an evidence portfolio process to inform CDEC sustainability decision making and evidence briefs to move learnings from evaluation partners into actionable insights. She shared the tool that was utilized to capture information across the three domains listed above, and then discussed how CDEC leadership could utilize the information across the domains to make informed decisions. Some of the learnings to date included creating a reflective time to pause; enabling a systems-level view to understand overall impacts; and promoting consistency and sustainability across units and activities.

Whitney shared just-released [stimulus evidence-building briefs](#) that include actionable insights across the programs and encouraged Commissioners to review them and share with their networks. Mary Alice shared that this was a huge step for the department in transparency in showcasing what programs had evidence to support continuation and how decisions were made regarding investments. She asked for feedback on the briefs and noted that the briefs will be made public on the CDEC website in the next few weeks.

Statewide Comprehensive Strategic Plan Update and Feedback

Tamilah Richardson, Start Early, provided an update on the Statewide Comprehensive Strategic Planning progress and shared a strategy survey. To date, they have hosted 14 community conversations, 11 focus groups, 17 key informant interviews, and reviewed many additional strategic plans and frameworks to inform the development of a synthesized document organized by the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* domains. A draft will be forthcoming that includes new strategies related to perinatal health and child health, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and economic mobility.

The Commissioners discussed the opportunity to use the comprehensive strategic plan to align investments and priority setting as well as identify where there are gaps in service delivery. Susan reminded the Commissioners that they will be asked to endorse the statewide comprehensive strategic plan in the next few months and invited feedback through the survey and other engagement opportunities in the next few weeks.

State Agency Updates

- **Colorado Department of Early Childhood:** Dr. Lisa Roy shared that CDEC has hired a new Communications Director, Carolyn Romero, as well as additional staff within the Universal Preschool Division. Tom Massey has retired and his last day is October 31, 2023. She noted that a communication went out this morning that announced a new proposed rule related to adding a Qualifying Factor to the Universal Preschool rules; those rules will be considered by the Rules Advisory Council in the coming months.

- **Governor's Office:** Tammi Hiler announced that the Governor will release his budget on November 1, 2023. There will be information and a briefing on the early childhood investments around the budget release. They are working on the legislative and policy priorities for the upcoming session.
- **Colorado Department of Education:** Dr. Floyd Cobb shared they are continuing to partner with CDEC on Universal Preschool related to special education. They are providing READ Act training for administrators, which is a new requirement for the next school year. They are conducting a rulemaking hearing on tuition cost reimbursements for charter schools. Finally, Colorado was accepted as a member of the Kindergarten Sturdy Bridge community of practice related to supporting kindergarten and transitions from preschool.
- **Health Care Policy & Financing:** Dr. Robert Werthwein noted that the Affordable Care Collaborative 3.0 implementation is coming soon; CHI shared a presentation at the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems that outlines the changes and received feedback.
- **Colorado Department of Human Services:** On behalf of Minna Castillo Cohen, Shannon Wilson shared that CDHS and CDEC recently entered into an MOU that aligns funding to support family strengthening and well-being. Also, the child welfare interim committee has completed their meetings and drafted a few bills that can be viewed [here](#).
- **Colorado Department of Higher Education:** Sam Fogleman shared an overview of the ECE Scholarship Program, noting that more than \$5Million in funds were delivered in FY 2022-2023. In addition, ECE 1011 and 1031 Stipends provided for almost 3,500 courses.
- **Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment:** Rachel Hutson provided several written updates [here](#), but noted a few highlights including that CDPHE and CDEC are hiring a joint Economic Mobility and County Relations Liaison that will start in early November and shared some updates regarding electronic transfers across early intervention referral systems.

Public Comment and Commissioner Updates

- No public comment.

Comprehensive Workforce Plan

Kacee Miller, Early Milestones Colorado, reminded everyone that they are supporting a process to update a comprehensive Early Childhood Workforce Development plan. In order to gather additional feedback, they are planning to extend the timeline, asking for ECLC endorsement in February 2024. The intention of this plan revision is to celebrate past accomplishments, build a foundation for the future that is a living document, and take a broad approach to ensure comprehensive roles across the early childhood workforce.

Tanya Weinberg, Early Milestones Colorado, shared that they will be sending out examples of the Role-Specific Primers as well as the Anchor Theme documents. Commissioners were asked to review the drafts and provide feedback via a form that will be shared following the meeting. Jennifer O'Brien shared reflections on the Early Childhood Workforce Development Subcommittee and Early Childhood Workforce Plan Task Force meetings, and how the information and feedback is being incorporated into the draft plan, which will come to the ECLC for review in December.

Home Visiting Task Force Annual Report

Joyce Johnson, CDEC, shared information on the Home Visiting Investment Task Force and shared their annual progress report. The Task Force focuses on home visiting programs across the state in implementing and advancing home visiting services to support families with children from birth to age six. She highlighted some of the accomplishments of the working groups, including the implementation of Family Connects as a model in Eagle, Boulder, Jefferson and Denver; creating a process to consistently collect data annually; and developing fact sheets regarding the use of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funds. The task force also supported several legislative successes, including extending postpartum care from 60 days to 12 months. They also provided a "request" from each of the

working groups to support their ongoing work. Commissioners are asked to review the slide presentation and reach out with questions or opportunities.

Universal Preschool Quality Standards

Dawn Odean began by sharing an overview of the process to develop the Quality Standards rule draft related to Universal Preschool Colorado. Utilizing the statute, as well as reviewing feedback from stakeholders and best practices from across the country, Early Milestones Colorado and Early Years Forward led a process that led to the creation of “concepts” that will be used to guide the actual rule language. Based on the feedback collected through that process, a draft rule will be made public on Monday for comment by stakeholders. Dawn noted that LCOs will be asked to host community conversations related to the quality standards; in addition, there will be a statewide webinar on November 13, 2023, to review the rule and then provide input.

The ECLC discussed how they could be supportive and engaged in the conversation related to quality standards. They proposed having a work session in December in order to receive the feedback from stakeholders and provide considerations on the concept, rules, and policy implementation ahead of the rule being considered by the Rules Advisory Council in January. The members also discussed identifying opportunities for alignment across early childhood education programming standards beyond Universal Preschool; this could be considered during the work session and an ongoing opportunity for support from the ECLC.

Next Steps and Final Thoughts

Sue Renner thanked everyone for attending and participating. The next meeting will be hybrid on December 14, 2023. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05pm.

Note: Any presentation requested by the ECLC does not constitute or imply an endorsement of the product, process, service, or organization by the ECLC.