



December 16, 2021

9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Google Hangouts: <https://meet.google.com/iis-ussg-arj>

Or by phone: 262-546-6427 PIN: 288 468 148#

Meeting Materials:

www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org/eclc-meeting-information

AGENDA

Meeting Objectives:

- Approve the December 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes
 - Review the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council - Workforce Waiver Update
 - Consider approval of Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Updates
 - Hear updates from ECLC Subcommittees
 - Learn about State Agency Updates and Legislative Priorities
 - Offer input on Draft Universal Preschool Recommendations
 - Hear comments from the Early Childhood Community
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|----------------------|---|
| 9:30-9:40am | Welcome, Introductions and Approve Minutes (Susan Steele) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACTION: Approve the December 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes• ECLC Membership Announcement |
| 9:40-9:45am | Business Meeting (Susan Steele) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• REVIEW: Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council - 12 Month Workforce Waiver Update (Stacy Petty - Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council) |
| 9:45-10:05am | Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Working Group Updates (Carrie Germeroth - Marzano Research) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACTION: Consider Approval of Changes to the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan |
| 10:05-10:20am | Legislative Updates (Bill Jaeger - Colorado Children's Campaign) |
| 10:20-10:40am | Subcommittee Updates (Susan Steele) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Quality and Alignment Subcommittee<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ ACTION: Consider Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Working Group• Data Subcommittee• Communication Subcommittee• Early Childhood Workforce Development Subcommittee |

- 10:40-11:05am** State Agency Updates and Legislative Priorities (Pamela Harris)
- Colorado Department of Human Services
 - Office of Early Childhood
 - Colorado Department of Higher Education
 - Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing
 - Colorado Department of Education
 - Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
- 11:05-11:15am** Break
- 11:15-11:25am** Public Comment (Pamela Harris)
- 11:25-12:25pm** Draft Universal Preschool Recommendations Discussion
(Nasha Patel - Watershed Advisors)
- 12:25-12:30pm** Co-Chairs' Next Steps, Final Thoughts and Adjourn (Pamela Harris)
-

Upcoming ECLC Meetings

- January 11, 2022
 - February 24, 2022
-

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

The next ECLC Meeting will be held on January 11, 2021 from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.

For information about future meeting dates, times and locations, visit www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org.



Early Childhood Leadership Commission December 2, 2021 ~ 2:30 - 4:30 pm

MINUTES

Meeting Objectives:

- Approve the November 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- Discuss Universal Preschool Recommendations
- Hear comments from the Early Childhood Community

Attendees: Adeeb Khan, Pamela Harris, Susan Steele, Tom Massey, Heather Craiglow, Sue Renner, Lucinda Burns, Melissa Colman, Jeanne McQueeney, Ida Rhodes, Jasmin Ramirez, Kristina Heyl

Welcome, Introductions & Approve Minutes

Tom Massey called the meeting to order at 2:34 pm and asked for a motion to approve the November 10, 2021 meeting minutes. Sue Renner motioned to approve the minutes as drafted, Jeanne McQueeney seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Universal Preschool Recommendations Discussion and Public Comment

Tom introduced Nasha Patel with Watershed Advisors to review the [draft universal preschool recommendations](#) and feedback collected so far. Nasha reminded the group of the required components that the Transition Work Group must include in the universal preschool recommendations and the themes being consider. These include application, funding flow, local partnerships, alignment with other programs, eligibility and prioritization for funding, mixed delivery, quality and evaluation, workforce, and special education service delivery.

To frame the work, Nasha explained that the recommendations are meant to provide the [Department of Early Childhood](#) (DEC) with guidance, direction and vision. These recommendations will serve as a starting point for the universal preschool program with the understanding that additional work with continued stakeholder engagement, review and evaluation will be necessary.

Next, Nasha walked the group through several universal preschool recommendations incorporating feedback from Transition Advisory Group members at their meeting the previous day. First, Nasha discussed the draft recommendation on infrastructure. Colorado's infrastructure investment should include local leads empowered to solve local challenges; align and ensure equity of funding in communities; and ensure a strong commitment for resources from the DEC. If a community is unable to establish a local lead, DEC should fulfill those responsibilities until one is identified. DEC should ensure Colorado's aligned early childhood vision is executed successfully across the state and should recruit and build the capacity of local partners within the first three years of universal preschool implementation. Local leads will be competitively selected and held accountable for a rigorous set of expectations with support from DEC. Local leads could be any public or nonprofit organization. DEC's role should be to build a common application; empower, launch, and oversee local leads; build capacity through infrastructure investment; align programs; incentivize local share; and ensure equitable funding. In this recommendation, funding would flow from the state to local leads in each community. Local leads should create a birth to five community plan with local partners and should ensure equitable distribution of funding adhering to DEC guidelines and promoting availability of care across ages. DEC should establish a unified vision for early childhood experiences birth to five.

Questions were raised about how many local leads will exist around the state, how they will be renewed, the cost of management, and whether having local leads manage funding flow is most efficient. Others asked who will local leads be applying to and when? Legislative work will impact timing, but hopefully the process will begin this spring. Leads will likely apply to DEC, and there will have to be a demonstration of local buy-in to ensure applicants will be the best fit for their community. Another question was raised about how to ensure every child is covered by a catchment area, avoiding gaps or overlaps. DEC would have to

ensure complete implementation coverage, but a one-size fits all approach would not account for ways local communities are already working collaboratively to provide care in their regions. Concerns were raised about the timeframe and costs to build this robust infrastructure before the launch of universal preschool in 2023. A suggestion was made to include language around leveraging existing local infrastructure.

The next recommendation centered on an easily accessible, streamlined common application process. DEC should ensure this application collects only as much information from families as is necessary. The application should reduce duplication of information collection and complexity of process for providers. It should include all publicly-funded early childhood services from birth to preschool and should include all funding sources that can be blended, braided or stacked with universal preschool dollars. DEC should fund and empower local navigation support to assist families with the application process.

Nasha then discussed the recommendation on eligibility and prioritization of funding. DEC should engage stakeholders and experts to determine a base per-child rate for universal preschool factoring in weighting for harder to serve populations and considering regional differences and other additional incentives such as teacher qualifications, quality, and others. DEC should ensure the total Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) funding does not drop overall, however the rate should not be connected to the school finance formula without accounting for inequities. The rate should be kept stable or increase over time, and there should be a plan for funding allocation in times of scarcity and excess. Three-year-old access should remain consistent, and implications to the entire birth to five system should always be considered.

There was discussion on whether universal preschool funding would cover additional services for families beyond instruction in the classroom, if that would take away from targeted funds for additional hours, and whether local plans should account for funding for additional services. The group also asked for clarification around the CPP rate not dropping below its current rate.

Nasha moved on to discuss quality and evaluation. Stakeholders have shared that there currently is not enough alignment across program standards and regulations or a clear understanding of quality across the state and programs. Current quality measures do not cover all types of providers, and QRIS level is not always an indicator of quality. The recommendation is for DEC to review existing regulations and standards to ensure alignment across funding sources; review standards from CPP, NIEER, HeadStart, and guidance on BBB to find ways to simplify and align standards; look for solutions when standards limit universal access; establish one definition of quality and support local communities to achieve it with a phased approach and capacity building; contract with an external evaluator to measure the success of universal preschool; and engage a broad range of stakeholders when deciding implementation of quality and evaluation.

Next, Nasha described the current early childhood workforce challenges. There is currently a severe workforce crisis with a loss of about 7% in the last year, and workforce preparation and competencies vary greatly. Universal preschool will require a larger workforce than Colorado has ever had. The profession must be elevated and respected in communities across the state. Innovative solutions should be considered to ensure enough teachers are available for the launch of the new preschool program including incentivizing providers to increase compensation; simplifying the process for entering and remaining in the workforce; ensuring the process for joining the early childhood workforce is welcoming and without barriers; considering an induction model to decrease the time it takes to place a teacher into a classroom; clearly defining the competencies needed by the workforce; and developing strategies with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), and Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to sustainably recruit and develop new members of the workforce with stackable, credit-bearing options.

Nasha provided some brief contextual information from CDE on the current state of preschool special education in Colorado. The [Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan](#) recommends CDE, in partnership with DEC and stakeholders, create a special education implementation plan to support districts, administrative units and other providers to fulfill the requirements of IDEA and Colorado's Exceptional

Children's Education Act (ECEA). This report recommends DEC consider additional funds for children with disabilities in the universal preschool rate and ensure accountability for strong collaboration between DEC and CDE on special education service delivery and support. DEC should establish clear expectations for supporting children from specific subgroups; create an interagency agreement with CDE to ensure all federal regulations are complied with; and support programs and communities to provide individualized, meaningful, culturally relevant, active and participatory learning for all children.

Nasha asked the group to provide their reactions and feedback. Suggestions included adding additional components of the workforce to the recommendations such as special education service providers, family supports, nutrition, and transportation; considering the use of waitlists as part of ensuring universal preschool is fully enrolled; addressing monitoring to ensure fidelity to the model and accountability; including information about the frequency and duration of the universal preschool program; addressing screening and referrals; and including transitions to Kindergarten in the report.

Public Comment was included as part of the universal preschool discussion. Michael Taylor asked questions about whether the Transition Advisory Group is considering expertise from organizations or individuals who have previously implemented universal preschool in other states and whether there are examples from other states worth modeling. Nasha has worked to collect information from other states, but in many ways, this will be unique to Colorado given the state's landscape. North Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, and Oregon all use similar infrastructure models with local leads. The Denver Preschool Program is also considered an important model for implementation, as well as some individual counties across the state.

Taran Schneider, Executive Director of Healthy Child Care Colorado, reiterated the need to ensure the universal preschool program is inclusive of comprehensive services. As an example of a current equity issue, Taran explained how child care health consultants are required by licensing to work with child care centers because in Colorado, the only people who can delegate the administration of medications or health procedures are registered nurses or physicians. Any child care setting in the state with a medication or health procedure needing to be taken care in the center must have a nurse to oversee that process. Therefore, there is already an infrastructure built around school nurses in public schools. Community-based child care providers do not have those school nurses, and although those positions are required by the state, they are not funded, and the financial burden lies with the provider. The incentive for a provider to enroll a child with significant health needs is nonexistent. As the work proceeds, it is important to consider health and well-being in a comprehensive way.

Charlotte Brantley previously worked in Texas as the State Child Care Administrator. She explained how they created a child care management services system, and she offered to share her experiences and expertise to help advise this process.

Christina Taylor leads the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County. She brought up some concerns among Councils around local leads. While Councils have a requirement for collaboration and connection within their communities, other agencies that might be selected as a local lead may not necessarily have those same requirements. Those connections are what create a unified system and should be called out very clearly in the selection process for any local coordinating agency.

Adeeb Khan, ECLC Commissioner and Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility & Executive Director of Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation, was asked to describe his thoughts on fiscal implementation. He described a process where the financial transactions occur between providers and the DEC rather than local leads based on an individual's eligibility for funding of specific services in order to reduce bureaucracies and administrative burden. Local leads would be responsible for coordination of services to ensure a cohesive system. Considerations must be made for local-level funding and multiple funding sources.

Bill Jaeger with the Colorado Children's Campaign spoke about the hope of avoiding or shifting from a competitive environment between the many different types of providers to instead a vision of strong

community collaboration. The role of the state vs. the role of local leadership should be thoroughly considered to ensure the most efficient system.

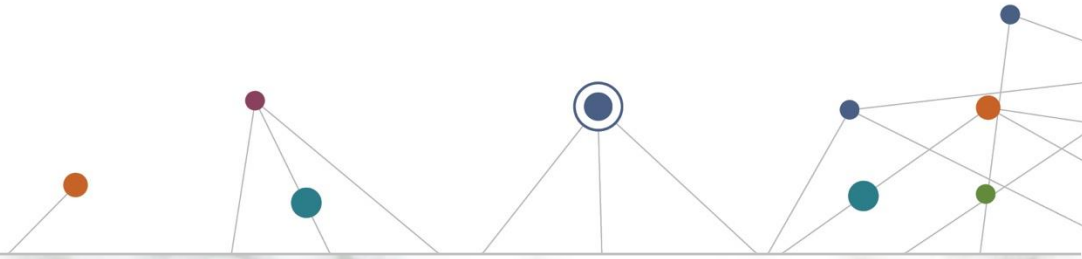
Kristina shared that the [draft universal preschool recommendations](#) will be released to the public next Tuesday evening at the [December Monthly Town Hall](#). The [Transition Advisory Group](#) will have an opportunity to meet and review the report on December 15. The [Universal Preschool](#) and [Special Education](#) Subgroups will also each meet one additional time to review the recommendations. Members of the Transition Working Group will host [four public listening sessions](#) to allow stakeholders the opportunity to share their reactions and input. A [feedback form](#) will be available on the [ECLC website](#) until the end of the day on December 15. The final report is due to the ECLC for approval on January 1, 2022. The [ECLC](#) will meet on January 11 to vote on approval.

The group discussed the potential for a community readiness assessment and the importance of distinguishing the differences between management, governance, and leadership and how those apply to the roles and expectations of the local leads.

Next Steps, Final Thoughts and Adjourn

Tom thanked Watershed Advisors for pulling all the work together in a timely manner. Susan and Pamela thanked everyone for their participation. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

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Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Update

December 2021



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Introduction

In December 2018, Colorado was awarded an initial Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG) of \$5.8 million to help the state analyze the current landscape of the early care and learning mixed-delivery system and implement changes that maximize high-quality early care and education options for low-income families, enhance the quality of care, streamline administrative infrastructure, and improve state-level early childhood care and education funding efficiencies.

In December 2019, Colorado was awarded a PDG Renewal of \$11,171,969 annually for three years (2020–2022). Renewal grant funds are used to implement activities identified in the [Colorado Shines Brighter \(CSB\) Strategic Plan](#). As part of the renewal grant, Colorado committed to an annual review and update to the CSB Strategic Plan to incorporate new findings from ongoing needs assessment activities, recommendations from the program evaluation and continuous quality improvement, and ongoing stakeholder feedback with an emphasis on families and caregivers of children birth through five.

To facilitate development of the recommended updates to the (CSB) Strategic Plan, the Colorado Department of Human Services contracted Marzano Research to conduct four primary activities: 1) collect input on the current early childhood policy landscape related to the Strategic Plan, 2) engage a diverse group of stakeholders to inform the recommendations, especially families and caregivers of children birth through five, 3) facilitate a working group, and 4) prepare a set of recommended updates to the Strategic Plan for the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) to consider for endorsement. These four activities are further described in the following report.

Activity 1. Collect Input on the Colorado Early Childhood Landscape

To inform updates to the CSB Strategic Plan in 2021, Marzano Research gathered and reviewed state-level policy and funding decisions with implications for the early care and education (ECE) system in Colorado. These documents included COVID-19 research briefs prepared by Early Milestones Colorado, stimulus funding documents, and state legislation related to universal preschool and the new Department of Early Childhood.

A key document reviewed to inform updates to the CSB Strategic Plan was the [Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan](#), finalized and approved by the ECLC in November 2021. The Transition Plan includes recommendations for transitioning early childhood services and programs from state agencies to the new DEC. The CSB Strategic Plan strategies were found to be well aligned with the recommendations in the Transition Plan (Figure 1).

The Department of Early Childhood should adopt the mission, vision, values, and guiding principles. These statements will help ground the new department in a vision set forth by stakeholders across the state.



Beginning in July 2022, the Colorado Preschool Program/Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement, the Early Childhood Workforce Development team, and all programs and services currently located in the CDHS Office of Early...



To address funding challenges identified by families and providers, the Department of Early Childhood should: Revise rules and regulations to ensure more flexibility with funds and reduce administrative burden while ensuring equitable...



The Department of Early Childhood should prioritize supporting the growth and development of its early childhood workforce by implementing the above recommendations.



To inform decisions for children in Colorado, the Department of Early Childhood should: Collect data that provides additional information on system capacity, including number of open or closed classrooms, number of current teachers...



To facilitate meaningful advice, consultation, and collaboration about rulemaking guidance, the Transition Working Group also recommends the creation of a diverse and well-supported Rules and Regulations Advisory...



As the agency that will continue to administer and oversee IDEA, Part B, CDE should make a plan to engage with and address the concerns raised by stakeholders before the new statewide, universal, preschool program begins in the 2023-...



The Department of Early Childhood should establish close collaboration with other departments to strengthen coordinating functions and to promote alignment among higher education, health care, mental health care, human...



Under an Executive Director, with significant experience in early childhood and systems management, the Department of Early Childhood should have a culturally diverse leadership team with a comprehensive set of skills, a strong equity...



By July 2025, the Department of Early Childhood and the Early Childhood Leadership Commission, in coordination with relevant departments and stakeholders, should review legal requirements and if federal law allows, review the...



The Department of Early Childhood should acquire the legislative authority and regulatory power of the funding streams tied to the programs moving to the department. The structure of the Long Bill should be designed to ensure...



The Early Childhood Leadership Commission should serve in a key advisory role to the leadership of DEC, as well as continuing its advisory capacity to state policymakers, other departments, and the...



Figure 1. Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan Recommendations and CSB Strategy Alignment

Activity 2. Stakeholder Engagement

Marzano Research engaged a diverse group of stakeholders to provide input to inform the recommended Strategic Plan updates. First, the Marzano Research facilitators attended two ECLC Program Quality and Alignment (PQAC) Subcommittee meetings to engage members to provide input on any recommended updates to the Strategic Plan strategies.

To ensure that updates to the Strategic Plan reflected input from families and caregivers, Marzano Research facilitators attended a meeting of the Office of Early Childhood Family Voice Council to gather input related to access to child care, needed support services, and COVID-19 impacts on families and children. This input was also shared with the Strategic Plan Working Group to inform strategy updates.

Activity 3. Strategic Plan Working Group

The Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Working Group, which sits under the PQAC, was approved by the ECLC on April 23, 2020. The purpose of the Working Group is to identify and monitor activities that support strategies in the Strategic Plan that are not funded through the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five and to recommend changes annually to update the Strategic Plan based on the current early childhood environment, new findings from ongoing needs assessment activities, recommendations from the program evaluation and continuous quality improvement, and ongoing stakeholder feedback with an emphasis on families and caregivers of children birth through five. Table 1 presents the membership of the Working Group.

Table 1. Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Working Group Members

Sector	Name	Organization
B-3/Infants and Toddlers	Christina Walker	Clayton Early Learning
Business Supports	Lindsey Vigoda	Small Business Majority
CDE P-3 Office	Megan Rogers	School Readiness Consultant
CDE P-3 Office	Rebecca Browning-Floyd	Regional Preschool Specialist
Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five	Lindsey Dorneman	Office of Early Childhood – Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five
Family Engagement	Amanda Culbertson	Office of Early Childhood – Family Engagement Manager

Early Childhood Councils	Clea Willow	Bright Futures
Early Intervention	Danielle Castle	Rocky Mountain Human Services
State Advisory Committee - ECLC	Kristina Heyl	Early Childhood Leadership Commission – Director
State Advisory Committee - ECLC	Kate Reinemund	Constellation Philanthropy, ECLC Data Subcommittee Co-Chair
English Language Learners/Refugee or Immigrant Populations	Khatira Amn	The Spring Institute
Family Providers	Stacey Carpenter	
Funders/Philanthropic Partners	Steffanie Clothier	Gary Community Ventures
Governor’s Office	Tova Cohen	Governor’s Office
Head Start	Tracey Lucero	Head Start and Migrant Head Start Program
Home Visitation	Lindsay Sherman	Invest in Kids
Homeless and Migrant Supports	Jenny Lerner	Colorado Department of Education
Licensed Child Care	Dawn Alexander	Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado
Mental Health	Dr. Jose Silva	Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health
Parents/Caregivers	Ealasha Vaughner	
Parents/Caregivers	Janelle Jenkins	
Physical Health and Wellness	Tracy Miller	Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
Public Preschool	Shelley Smith	Eagle County School District
Special Education	Dawn Klco	Salida School District
Workforce Development	Vail Shoultz-McCole	Colorado Mesa Community College

The Working Group was convened for two meetings. The purpose of Meeting 1 was to engage the working members in the evaluation of the non-PDG strategies to identify possible updates. In small groups, the members engaged in a review of input from the Colorado early childhood landscape along with their collective experience to assess progress toward meeting the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan. As a follow-up to the meeting, additional feedback was solicited from members via a survey. The survey asked members to provide input on updates to the non-PDG-funded strategies as well as any missing strategies under each of the six goals. Six members responded to this follow-up survey. Thirty percent of the responses indicated some amendment was needed to update the strategies, while 61 percent recommended no change across strategies (Figure 2). Only 4 percent of respondents suggested that strategies were missing across the goals, and 5 percent suggested a strategy be dropped.

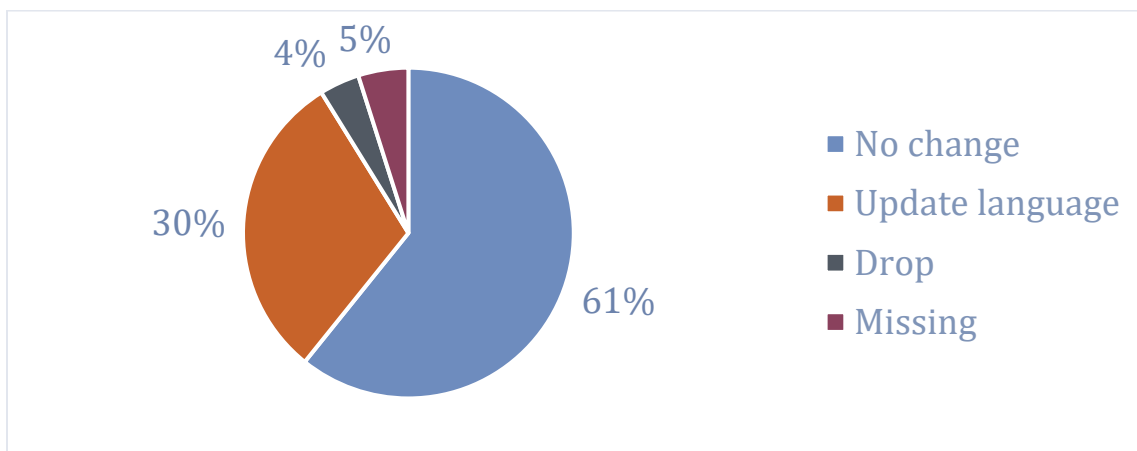




Figure 2. Working Group Recommendations Across Strategies (n = 6)

The Working Group met a second time to review the survey results and further process recommended updates to the non-PDG-funded strategies. The members reviewed proposed updates to the non-PDG-funded strategies based on the survey results, conversations from Meeting 1, and PQAC input. As a follow-up to the meeting, the members received a final set of draft recommended updates electronically for review. All members who responded to the final review email agreed that the recommended updates were responsive to the Working Group input. The final set of recommended updates is presented in the next section in Tables 2 and 3.





Activity 4. Recommended Updates to the Strategic Plan

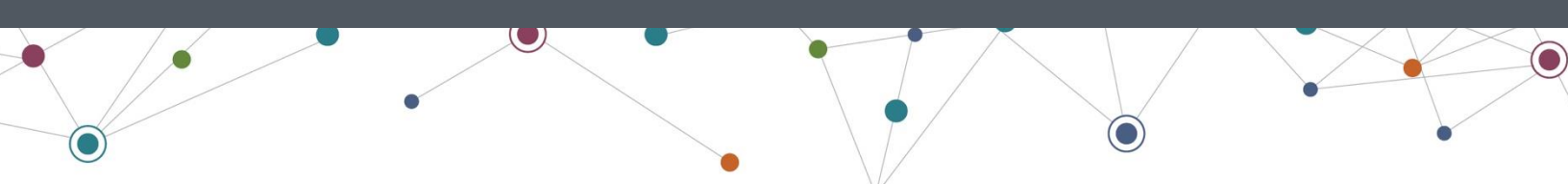
The CSB Strategic Plan currently includes 59 strategies. Thirty-six of the strategies are funded under the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five renewal grant, as noted by the  symbol. The remaining 23 need to be implemented in partnership with the ECLC and other state and local organizations, noted by the  symbol. The 2020

[Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan](#) can be referenced for the complete set of current strategies.

Recommended updates to the strategies were informed by 1) input from the Colorado early childhood landscape, 2) ongoing needs assessment activities, 3) current early childhood environment, and 4) a response to continuous quality improvement. Of the 59 strategies, 22 PDG-funded and 10 non-PDG-funded strategies are recommended for update. Twenty-seven strategies remain unchanged in the Strategic Plan. The proposed updates to existing strategies are presented in Table 2, followed by recommendations for two new strategies in Table 3. A summary of why the update is recommended is also provided for each strategy.


Table 2. 2020 Strategy and Recommended Updates to the 2021 Strategic Plan Strategies


2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
 1.1.2 Data-Driven Decision Making. Build a public-facing dashboard to support community-level information on the state of the local early childhood system and data-driven decisions.	 1.1.2 Data-Driven Decision Making. Develop a strategic plan to inform implementation of an early childhood integrated data system to support state- and community-level information on the early childhood system and data-driven decisions.
<p>Summary of the update—This strategy was updated to reflect the need to first develop a plan to implement an ECIDS and more accurately describe what is occurring under the PDG.</p>	
 1.2.1 Coordinated Application & Local Navigation. Research existing national and local models of coordinated enrollment/application and service navigation and identify recommendations for local implementation.	 1.2.1 Coordinated Application & Local Navigation. Research existing national and local models of coordinated application, eligibility, and enrollment and service navigation and identify recommendations for a Colorado model. Review early childhood program applications to improve accessibility and usability.




2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
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Summary of the update—This strategy was updated to better reflect the work of the Coordinated Application, Eligibility, and Enrollment workgroup facilitated by OEC and the PDG B-5 TA Center and the CCCAP Application Rewrite workgroup.

 1.2.2 Medicaid Billing Manual. Develop and make updates to Medicaid billing process manuals for Child First, Healthy Steps, Early Intervention Colorado, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Nurse-Family Partnership, SafeCare Colorado, and other state-funded home visiting programs. Provide training and technical assistance to support utilization.

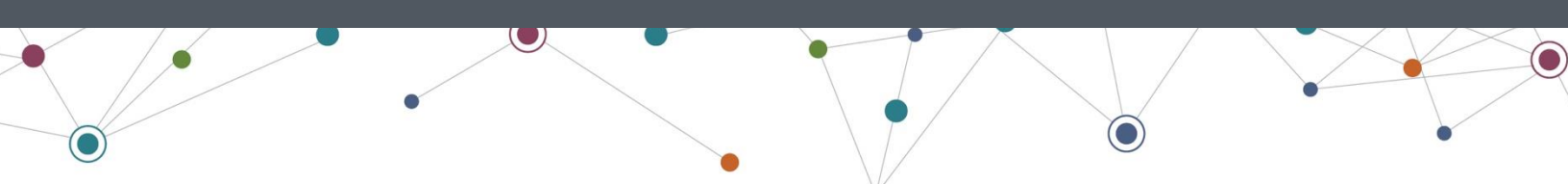
 1.2.2 Medicaid Billing Guides. Develop and make updates to Medicaid billing process guides for Child First, Healthy Steps, Early Intervention Colorado, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Nurse-Family Partnership, SafeCare Colorado, and other state-funded home visiting programs. Provide training and technical assistance to support utilization.







Summary of the update—This strategy was updated to reflect current work by a vendor that will end in 2021. Additionally, “Manual” was changed to “Guides” for accuracy.

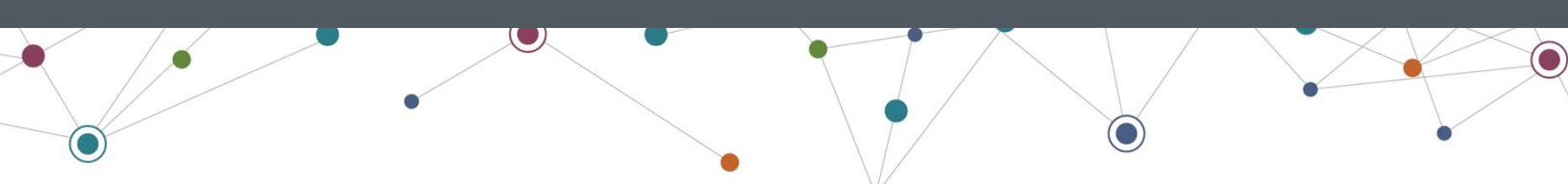
 1.2.4 ECC and FRC Organizational Capacity. Review the 2019 Early Childhood Council (ECC) and Family Resource Center (FRC) organizational capacity study. Through stakeholder workgroups identify, prioritize, and implement recommendations to increase the capacity of ECCs and FRCs to enable the provision of early care and education and wraparound services to more underserved children and families. Expand the ECC triennial evaluation to include a cost analysis of the resources needed to fully fund the local system.

 1.2.4 ECC and FRC Organizational Capacity. Partner with Early Childhood Councils (ECCs), Family Resource Centers (FRCs), and leadership organizations to identify, prioritize, and implement recommendations to strengthen local collaboration and increase the capacity of ECCs and FRCs to provide services to children and families. Develop and pilot shared data measures for ECCs. Formulate recommendations to improve the 2022 ECC triennial evaluation and include a cost analysis in the 2025 evaluation.

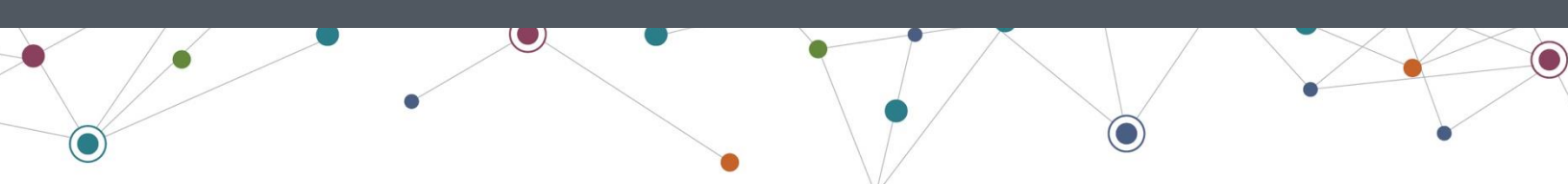
Summary of the update—The strategy was updated to reflect the ECC Triennial that is legislatively mandated and due October 1, 2022. A work team is currently identifying the strategies for measuring effectiveness for the 2025 Triennial reporting.









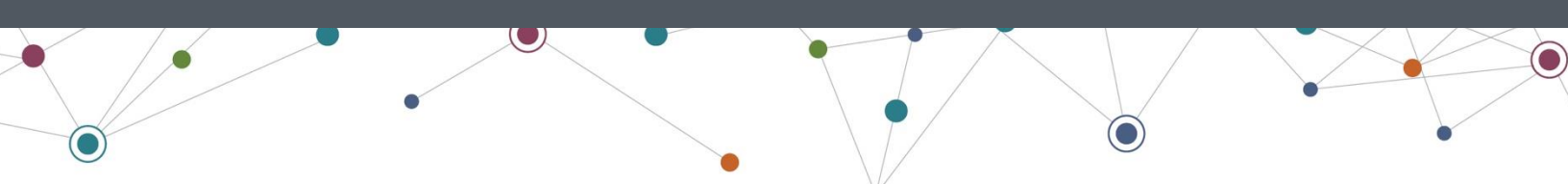
2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
 1.2.5 Core Local Services. Determine the core early childhood and family and community support services to be made available in each county and create a plan to address local service gaps.	 1.2.5 Core Local Services. Document the core early childhood, family, and community support services in each county and implement a plan to address local service gaps.
Summary of the update —The strategy was updated for accuracy. Specifically, “Determine” was changed to “Document.” Additionally, “implement” a plan replaces “create” a plan to move the strategy further toward action.	
 1.2.6 State Organizational Alignment. Expand ongoing coordination and collaboration across state agencies including CDHS, CDPHE, Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), and Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to improve child and family outcomes. Identify opportunities to address systems and administrative barriers.	 1.2.6 State Organizational Alignment. Expand ongoing coordination and collaboration across state agencies including CDHS, CDPHE, Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF), and Department of Early Childhood (DEC) to improve child and family outcomes. Identify and address systems and administrative barriers within and across the agencies.
Summary of the update —The strategy was updated to include the new Department of Early Childhood as a collaborator on this strategy and removed “opportunity” to move this strategy forward to action.	
 1.2.7 Local ECE Alignment. Support school district implementation of systemic coordination with community based ECE programs to improve children’s transitions to kindergarten (and early elementary school grades).	 1.2.7 Local ECE Alignment. Support early care and education service providers in the implementation of systemic coordination to improve families’ and children’s transitions to kindergarten.
Summary of the update —This strategy was broadened to include community partners both public and private, using the terminology of “early care and education service providers.” Additionally, content in parentheses was removed and “families” added.	









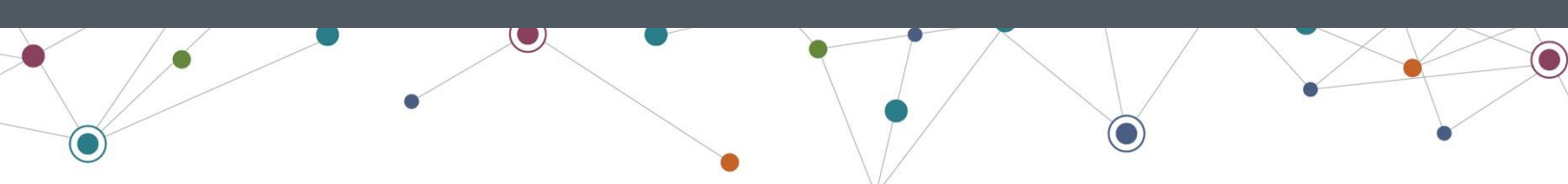
2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
 <p>1.3.1 Transitions Toolkit & Marketplace. Create a transition plan toolkit and online marketplace for early childhood professionals to communicate with families. Engage parents and caregivers to determine appropriate communication strategies for families.</p>	 <p>1.3.1 Transitions Toolkit. Create a transition plan toolkit for early childhood professionals to communicate with families. Engage parents and caregivers to determine appropriate communication strategies.</p>
Summary of the update —This strategy was updated for accuracy.	
 <p>1.3.2 Transitions Roadmap. The Office of Early Childhood and the Preschool through Third Grade Office will develop a birth through five transitions roadmap and identify the needed local training and tools for implementation. The roadmap will encompass support for children, including those with special health or developmental needs, their families, and early care and education and K-3 professionals, as well as home visitors, early intervention, child health, and early childhood mental health professionals.</p>	 <p>1.3.2 Transitions Roadmap. Develop and disseminate a kindergarten transitions roadmap and training and tools for implementation. The roadmap should encompass support for children, including those with special health or developmental needs, their families, and early care and education and K-3 professionals, as well as home visitors, early intervention, child health, and early childhood mental health professionals.</p>
Summary of the update —The strategy was updated to reflect a new phase of implementation to develop and disseminate the transitions roadmap.	
 <p>2.1.2 Home Visiting for ECE Home Providers. Continue the Home Visiting for Child Care Homes Pilot Program through 2020. Evaluate outcomes to inform practice and future expansion.</p>	 <p>2.1.2 Home Visiting for ECE Home Providers. Disseminate the Home Visiting for Child Care Homes Pilot Program case study to share outcomes, inform practice, and identify opportunities for expansion.</p>
Summary of the update —The strategy was updated to reflect a new phase of implementation. The project has transitioned to case study completion, followed by community dissemination.	







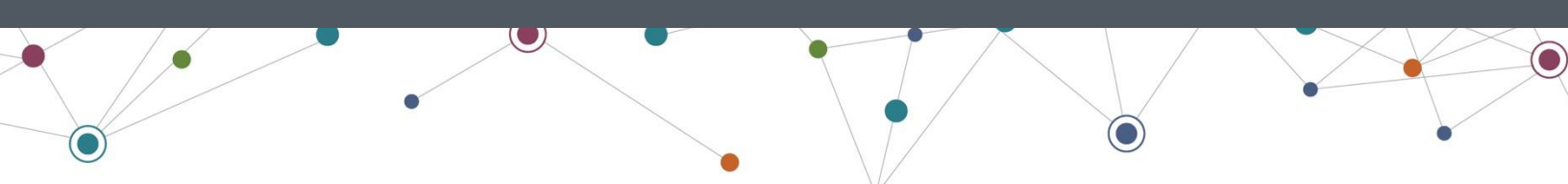
2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
 <p>2.1.3 ECMHC Practices. Complete an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation service delivery model evaluation to inform workforce standards, model development, and quality improvement.</p>	 <p>2.1.3 ECMHC Practices. Develop a Colorado model of Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultation that responsively meets the needs of children, families, and providers, while also being adopted by practitioners, implemented to fidelity, and subject to evaluation. Align and coordinate the larger ECMH field to facilitate statewide implementation.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—The strategy was updated for accuracy. This strategy will be awarded in the updated QRIS framework. There is also new work to align and coordinate the larger ECMH field to facilitate a statewide model implemented to fidelity.</p>	
 <p>2.2.1 Quality Nutrition in ECE Settings. Coordinate with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and Colorado Department of Education to increase early care and education provider participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch Program, and the School Breakfast Program.</p>	 <p>2.2.1 Quality Nutrition in ECE Settings. The Colorado Department of Human Services, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and Colorado Department of Education will coordinate to reduce barriers and increase early care and education provider participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch Program, and the School Breakfast Program.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—This strategy was updated for accuracy, adding that these practices within ECE programs will be awarded in the updated QRIS framework.</p>	
 <p>2.2.2 ECMHC Warmline & Telehealth. Create an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation warm-line and explore telehealth options for both families and early childhood education providers in rural communities.</p>	 <p>2.2.2 ECMHC Support Line & Teleconsultation. Create a statewide Early Childhood Mental Health Support Line, strengthen teleconsultation practices, and encourage use of teleconsultation to serve families and early childhood education providers in rural communities.</p>



2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
Summary of the update —This strategy was updated for accuracy, to reflect use of telehealth since 2020. ECMHC Warmline is now called ECMHC Support Line.	
 2.2.3 Physical Activity in ECE Settings. Increase physical activity in early care and education settings.	 2.2.3 Physical Activity in ECE Settings. Promote moderate to vigorous physical activity that is developmentally appropriate and carried out in a variety of modalities and settings.
Summary of the update —This strategy changed “Increase” to “Promote.” It also added “moderate to vigorous,” “developmentally appropriate,” and “variety of modalities and settings” to be specific about the types of physical activity and broaden to different places and ways the activity can occur.	
 3.1.1 School Readiness Handbook. Develop a school readiness handbook for families and informal child care providers to share best practices and resources to support children’s learning and development. Implement a plan for dissemination and use, including online and print distribution in multiple languages.	 3.1.1 School Readiness Handbook. Disseminate The PLAYbook to families and informal child care providers to inform best practices and resources to support children’s learning and development. Translate The PLAYBook into multiple languages.
Summary of the update —This strategy was updated to reflect a new phase of implementation.	
 3.1.5 No-Wrong-Door Campaign. Support the continued implementation of the no-wrong-door strategy, which ensures families can access information quickly, make timely connections, and receive support regardless of their initial entry point into the early childhood system.	 3.1.5 No-Wrong-Door Approach. Support the continued implementation of no-wrong-door strategies to ensure families can access information quickly, make timely connections, and receive support regardless of their initial entry point into the early childhood system.
Summary of the update —This strategy was updated to reflect stakeholder comments to change the word “campaign” and to add language related to carrying out or implementing the strategy.	




2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
 3.1.7 Family Attitudes & Decision-Making. Increase shared decision-making with families in the mixed-delivery system, incorporating family opinions, Colorado Shines ratings, and considerations of reputation, cost, and teacher qualifications on provider selection.	 3.1.7 Family Decision-Making. Engage families in shared decision-making with early care and education service providers through a process that incorporates information on key considerations for selecting programs and providers.
Summary of the update —This strategy was updated to broadened to “early care and education service providers” to be more inclusive of the types of services families access. The word “Increase” was changed to “Engage” families.	
 3.3.1 Parent & Stakeholder Engagement. The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) will continue to engage with the CDHS Family Voice Council, Head Start Collaboration Office, Colorado Head Start Association, and state and local family and caregiver networks to support ongoing family engagement and leadership.	 3.3.1 Parent & Stakeholder Engagement. The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) will continue to engage with the CDHS Family Voice Council, OEC Family Voice Council, Head Start Collaboration Office, Colorado Head Start Association, Family Leadership Network, and state and local family and caregiver networks to support ongoing family engagement and leadership. Develop and disseminate a statewide Family Engagement Framework.
Summary of the update —This strategy was updated for accuracy, to include creation of the OEC Family Voice Council & Family Engagement Framework.	
 3.3.2 Local Family Engagement & Leadership. Build capacity and identify points of collaboration with community-based organizations and ECCs to engage family leaders, including consultation and engagement with local FRCs and Head Start programs, state-funded preschool, and school districts to ensure families are empowered to become community leaders.	 3.3.2 Local Family Engagement & Leadership. Build capacity and identify points of collaboration with early care and learning service providers to empower and engage families in a variety of leadership and advocacy roles.




2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
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Summary of the update—In response to stakeholder input to broaden the strategy, specific entities were removed and replaced with “early care and learning service providers.” Additionally, the strategy was broadened from families being “community leaders” to engaging in a “variety of leadership and advocacy roles.”

 **4.1.6 Regulatory & Policy Cross-training.** Explore the potential for CDHS, CDE, ECCs, school districts, local regulatory entities, the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), and professional associations to cross-train on ECE regulatory and policy changes to improve eq


 **4.1.6 Regulatory & Policy Cross-training.** Develop strategies for CDPHE, CDHS, CDE, DEC, ECCs, school districts, local regulatory entities, the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), and professional associations to cross-train on ECE regulatory and policy changes to improve equitable access to services.


Summary of the update—To reflect progress with the strategy and the need to move forward, “Explore” was changed to “Develop strategies.” Additionally, the new Department of Early Childhood and CDHPE were added as collaborators on strategy.

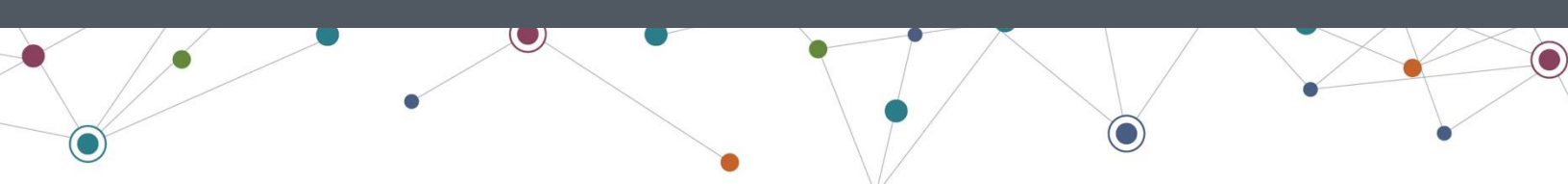
 **4.1.8 Early Start Model Development.** Develop a model of direct service, care coordination, and parenting support to connect families of children up to age three who do not meet eligibility for IDEA Part C Early Intervention to programs and services that can address children’s developmental needs.

 **4.1.8 Early Start Model Implementation.** Identify resources to implement a model of direct service, care coordination, and parenting support to connect families of children up to age three who do not meet eligibility for IDEA Part C Early Intervention but have identified delays or risk factors to programs and services that can address children's developmental needs.

Summary of the update—Changes were made to reflect a new phase in strategy implementation from development of a model to identification of resources to support implementation of the model.

 **5.1.1 Pre-licensing & Start-Up.** Explore challenges to ECE program pre-licensing and start-up activities, including license-exempt ECE providers, such as FFN, and investigate how business consultants/navigators could support through technical assistance on



 **5.1.1 Pre-licensing & Start-Up.** Partner with early care and education providers to address pre-licensing and start-up challenges, and connect them to resources to support sustainability and financially sound business





2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
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launching and sustaining a financially sound, licensed ECE program with livable wages.	practices, including how to achieve livable wages.
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Summary of the update—To be more proactive, the strategy was updated from “Explore” to “Partner to address” pre-licensing and start-up challenges. Additionally, the strategy was broadened to “early care and education service providers” to acknowledge business support needed for all providers. The second sentence was updated to connect “achieving livable wages” as part of sustainability and sound business practices.

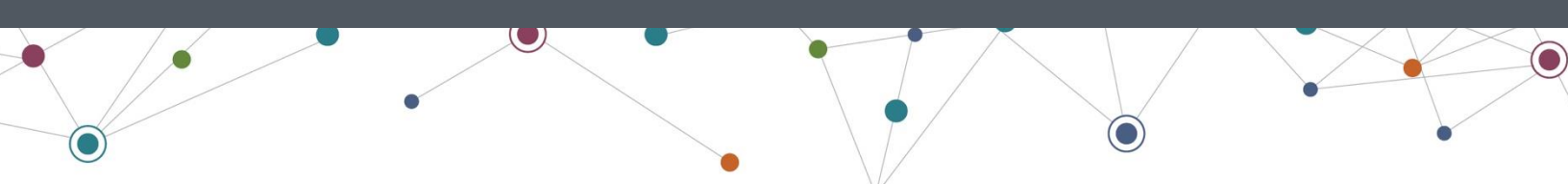
 <p>5.1.2 Business Practices. Provide the “Strengthening Business Practices for Child Care Programs” training series to early care and education providers to strengthen foundational knowledge of sound fiscal management and business operations. Develop a business resource toolkit to accompany the training series.</p>	 <p>5.1.2 Business Practices. Partner with OEDIT, Small Business Development Center Network, and Early Childhood Councils to provide business training and individualized consultation to strengthen early care and education providers’ foundational knowledge of sound fiscal management and business operations.</p>
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





Summary of the update—This strategy was updated for accuracy.

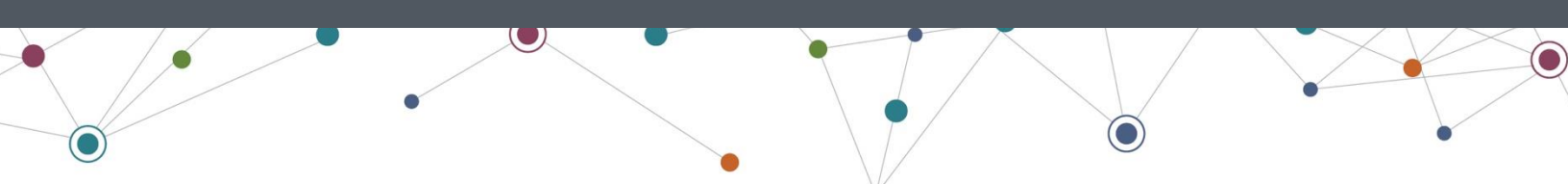
 <p>5.1.5 Integrated Financing. Develop tools to inform and support the integration of early care and education funding streams including Colorado Child Care Assistance Program, Colorado Preschool Program, Head Start, and local subsidies, and provide guidance on blending and braiding funds.</p>	 <p>5.1.5 Child Care Business Guides. Develop and disseminate business guides to early care and education providers to support connections to resources and the adoption of best practices including the blending and braiding of funding streams, budgeting, regulatory compliance, and other operational functions of a small business.</p>
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Summary of the update—This strategy was updated for accuracy. These guides will be a high-level compendium of resources covering business best practices, including the integration of early care and education funding streams, blending and braiding funds, budgeting, legal structures, regulatory compliance, marketing, and more.

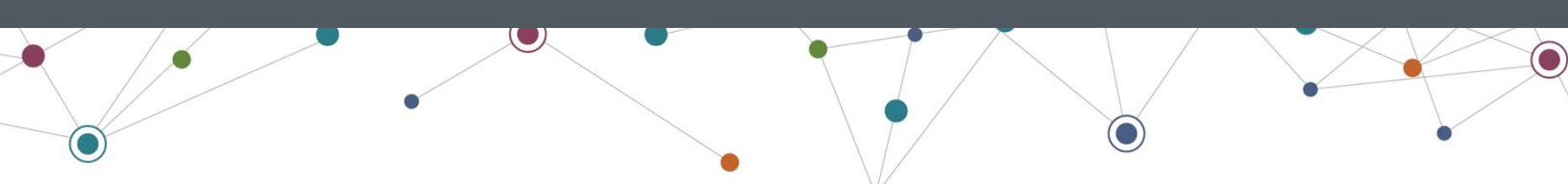
 <p>6.1.1 Colorado Shines Updates. Continue to retool the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for the</p>	 <p>6.1.1 Colorado Shines Updates. Implement the new Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement</p>
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2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
<p>Environmental Rating Scale 3 and implement other tools. Support more ratings, including alternative pathways, through an increase in rating assessors. Incorporate stakeholder workgroup findings into the QRIS Framework, including an increased emphasis on cultural and linguistic responsiveness. Complete a validation study in 2022.</p>	<p>System (QRIS) Framework and the Environmental Rating Scale 3. Complete a validation study of the Framework in 2023.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—The strategy was updated to reflect a new phase in the work. The framework was updated and released as of September 2021. The implementation will be January 2022. The validation will start in late 2022 and will be completed in 2023 to have enough data to make determinations that the structure is valid.</p>	
<p> 6.1.3 LENA Grow. Build infrastructure through public-private partnerships to support and coordinate LENA Grow implementation across the state.</p>	<p> 6.1.3 LENA Grow. Continue to build infrastructure that empowers local implementation partners to expand access to LENA Grow across the state.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—The strategy was updated to reflect the next phase of implementation.</p>	
<p> 6.1.5 Informed and Effective ECE for Children with Delays or Disabilities. Explore the development of local communities of practice to help formal (licensed) early care and education providers adopt inclusive practices and connect to early childhood mental health services and other resources in their community.</p>	<p> 6.1.5 Informed and Effective ECE for Children with Delays or Disabilities. Develop state-level infrastructure to pilot and sustain community implementation teams promoting the adoption of inclusive practices in early care and education programs.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—The strategy was updated to reflect the next phase of implementation.</p>	
<p> 6.2.1 Professional Development Information System. Re-platform the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System to improve user experience, enhance data collection, and enable transcreation of the site into Spanish.</p>	<p> 6.2.1 Professional Development Information System. Support user access to, and participation in, the updated Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System. Add</p>





2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
Add 24 eLearning course hours based on identified needs.	new eLearning course hours in English and Spanish based on identified needs.
<p>Summary of the update—The strategy was updated to reflect the next phase of implementation.</p>	
<p> 6.2.2 CDA Credential. Provide Child Development Associate (CDA) scholarships to 250 early care and education professionals, targeting areas with known workforce shortages. Add CDA professional development specialists to support implementation.</p>	<p> 6.2.2 CDA Credential. Provide Child Development Associate (CDA) scholarships to early care and education professionals, targeting areas with known workforce shortages. Add CDA professional development specialists to support implementation.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—The strategy was updated to reflect the next phase of implementation.</p>	
<p> 6.2.3 Coaching. Pilot a state early care and education coaching model including Colorado Shines Quality Rating Improvement System and Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care. Increase staff to meet the needs of known coaching deserts and provide additional meetings and formal supports for coaches. Update courses, transcreate coaching materials, and explore a telehealth approach to coaching.</p>	<p> 6.2.3 Coaching. Pilot a state early care and education coaching model including Colorado Shines Quality Rating Improvement System and Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care. Utilize regional coaches to increase data collection and provide data-informed training and formal supports for coaches including reflective supervision. Update courses, transcreate coaching materials, and utilize a telehealth approach to coaching.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—The strategy was updated to reflect the next phase of implementation, specifically, expansion to use regional coaches to support reflective supervision.</p>	
<p> 6.2.4 Reciprocity. Consider developing a framework to explore reciprocity in credentials and licensure across states (starting with Region VIII) and countries (starting with countries with the highest migration to Colorado), and provide supports</p>	<p> 6.2.4 Reciprocity. Consider a framework to address reciprocity in credentials and licensure across states (starting with Region VIII) and countries (starting with countries with the highest migration to Colorado), and provide</p>

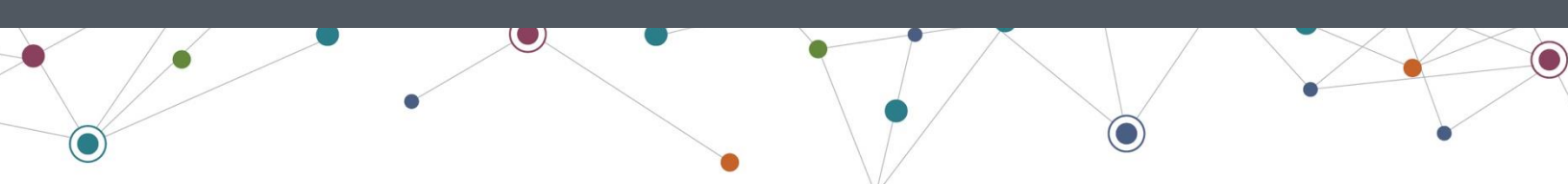


2020 Strategy	Recommended 2021 Update
for review of transcripts and other approval processes.	supports for review of transcripts and other approval processes.
Summary of the update —The word “developing” was removed and “address” was added to support further action with this strategy.	
 6.2.5 ECE Competencies. Enhance the training alignment process to increase the number of trainings aligned with Colorado’s Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators.	 6.2.5 ECE Competencies. Enhance the training alignment process to increase the number of trainings aligned with Colorado’s Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Professionals.
Summary of the update —This strategy was updated with the new ECE competencies document name.	

Below we present two potential new strategies that arose from the Working Group input and are responsive to the Colorado ECE policy landscape and the need for continuous quality improvement.

Table 3. Recommended New Strategies

New Strategy	Rationale
 6.2.7 Recruitment and Retention. Update the Early Childhood Workforce 2020 plan to support the recruitment and retention of early care and education professionals from diverse backgrounds and who speak the language and reflect the cultures of children in care.	This non-PDG-funded strategy is recommended to reflect the need to develop a plan to recruit and retain professionals from diverse backgrounds and who speak the language and reflect the cultures of children in care. This strategy will help ensure that children and families experience equitable and inclusive services and see themselves represented in the places where they access services. This strategy also could be inclusive of supporting development of PD in languages beyond English or Spanish.
 6.2.8 Pipeline Opportunities. Explore and expand access to early childhood apprenticeship and peer mentoring programs, including providing concurrent	This non-PDG-funded strategy is recommended to reflect the momentum statewide around apprenticeship as a strategy for ECE professional recruitment and the need to increase the ECE workforce to support Universal Preschool.



New Strategy	Rationale
enrollment apprenticeship opportunities for high school students to gain work experience in ECE settings.	

Conclusion

This report presents a set of recommended updates to the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan for the Early Childhood Leadership Commission to consider for endorsement. The recommendations are the result of findings from the policy and practice landscape document review, ongoing needs assessment data, stakeholder feedback, and the need for continuous quality improvement. The Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan will be reviewed and updated as needed annually during the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five renewal grant period to incorporate new findings from ongoing needs assessment activities, recommendations from the program evaluation and continuous quality improvement, and ongoing stakeholder feedback with an emphasis on families and caregivers of children birth through five.



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DRAFT

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Working Group

The ECCS Working Group will guide the implementation of the Colorado Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant: Health Integration Prenatal-to-three Program (CO-ECCS). This project works to advance the infrastructure, capacity, equity, and sustainability of Colorado’s maternal and early childhood systems of care and will be implemented collaboratively by key agencies comprising Colorado’s infrastructure for the delivery and coordination of prenatal-to-three (P-3) services. The ECCS Grant supports Colorado in achieving its vision that: *“All children are valued, healthy, and thriving and have equal access to services, supports and resources.”*

Working Group Charge

The Working Group is charged as an advisory group for the ECCS Grant. The Working Group will engage stakeholders in the system of wrap-around supports for families during pregnancy through the first three years of a child’s life to ensure alignment of Colorado’s early childhood and maternal child health systems. In order to advance health equity of P-3 services, the Working Group will collect information and examine data from diverse partners to inform a Health Equity Action Plan.

ECLC Areas of Opportunity

After engaging with stakeholders to understand the history and progress of early childhood in Colorado, as well as the wide array of policy strategies and opportunities that exist to ensure the state continues to move forward, the Commission has identified three Areas of Opportunity that are most critical to continue the advancement of work in early childhood across the state. The following Areas of Opportunity align with the goals of the ECCS Grant.

Area 3: Support improved family health and economic security through a Two Generation approach.

ECLC Legislative Duties

§ 26-6.2-104. Early Childhood Leadership Commission duties associated with the Working Group:

- (a) To identify opportunities for, and barriers to, the alignment of standards, rules, policies, and procedures across programs and agencies that support young children;
- (b) To advise and make recommendations to the state department and to other relevant early childhood entities concerning implementation of the early childhood Colorado framework;
- (c) To assist public and private agencies in coordinating efforts on behalf of pregnant women and children and their families, including securing funding and additional

investments for services, programs, and access to these services and programs for children and their families;

(f) To develop strategies and monitor efforts concerning:

(I) Increasing children's school readiness;

(II) Increasing participation in and access to childcare and early education programs; and

(III) Promoting family and community engagement in children's early education and development.

Goals of the ECCS Working Group

- Expand health care providers' use of a single point of entry and coordinated intake and referral system.
- Identify and assess policy barriers across early childhood systems and build on health innovations to improve systems.
- Align family engagement strategies across early childhood and maternal child health initiatives and create a structure for incorporating feedback into planning.
- Support local communities in collaborative planning and blending funds for program implementation.
- Merge health into the early childhood system by examining existing needs assessments that impact the early childhood population and implement health equity strategies.
- Examine racial disparities identified in data sets and needs assessments and use data to inform the health equity plan.
- Collect information from diverse partners through existing advisory councils to inform the P-3 Health Equity Action Plan.
- Produce and disseminate an Early Childhood Health Equity Action Plan.

Membership Sectors

Members of the Working Group serve as voting members with all stakeholders encouraged to actively participate.

- Families
- Colorado Department of Human Services
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Early Childhood Leadership Commission
- Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing
- Statewide Early Childhood Organizations
- Local Regional Accountability Entities (RAEs)
- Local Community Providers for Oral, Mental and Physical Health (including Nutrition)
- Local Departments of Public Health
- Health Care System Partners
- Refugee Services
- Housing Services
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Services
- Colorado Office of eHealth Innovation

ECCS Working Group Next Steps

- Identify co-chairs
- Determine and invite members from identified sectors to serve on the workgroup.
- Implementation teams formed and meetings to work on implementation strategies and efforts with monthly reports to the full workgroup of progress and challenges for insights, support, and coordination.
- Monthly coordination meetings to ensure that work activities are aligned and that synergies are occurring throughout the teams
- Facilitate the implementation of the goals and objectives for the ECCS Grant
- Create and disseminate an Early Childhood Health Equity Action Plan

Meetings

The Working Group will meet monthly. All meetings will be supported through an independent facilitator and have remote participation options

Duration

The Working Group membership was designated on **December xx, 2021**, until August 2022, and subject to annual review and reauthorization.

Thank you for joining! We will begin shortly.

ECLC

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

December 16, 2021

9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Google Hangouts



- Please remember to mute your computer or phone when not speaking ●
- We will be recording the meeting ●
- All materials can be found at: www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org/eclc-meeting-information ●

Meeting Objectives

- Approve the December 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- Review the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council - Workforce Waiver Update
- Consider approval of Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Updates
- Hear updates from ECLC Subcommittees
- Learn about State Agency Updates and Legislative Priorities
- Offer input on Draft Universal Preschool Recommendations
- Hear comments from the Early Childhood Community



Welcome, Introductions and Approve Minutes

Susan Steele

THANK YOU!

Anne-Marie Braga

for your dedication to Colorado's children and families

-and-

WELCOME!

Minna Castillo Cohen




thank
you!

K. Jehan Benton-Clark

We truly appreciate your valuable
contributions and wish you all the best!

Business Meeting

- Stacy Petty - Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council
 - 12 Month Workforce Waiver Update



**Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan
Working Group Updates
Carrie Germeroth - Marzano Research**



December 16, 2021

Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Update

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Carrie Germeroth and Mike Siebersma

“This project was made possible by grant number 90TP0054. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.”

2021 Inputs to the CSB Strategic Plan

Engage

Engage a diverse group of stakeholders, including PQAC and beyond, to inform the recommendations especially families and caregivers of children birth through five.

Facilitate

Facilitate strategic plan workgroup meetings

Review

Review relevant Colorado early childhood landscape policy and practice documents, including the Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan.

CSB SP Working Group Purpose

Identify and monitor activities that support strategies in the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan that are not funded through the Preschool Development Grant

Recommend changes to update the Strategic Plan based on current early childhood environment, new findings from ongoing needs assessment activities, recommendations from the program evaluation and continuous quality improvement, and ongoing stakeholder feedback with an emphasis on families and caregivers of children birth through five.

Working Group Members

B-3/Infants and Toddlers	Governor's Office
Business Supports	Head Start
CDE P-3 Office	Home Visitation
CDE P-3 Office	Homeless and Migrant Supports
CDHS Office of Early Childhood	Licensed Child Care
CDHS Office of Early Childhood	Mental Health
Early Childhood Councils	Parents/Caregivers
Early Intervention	Parents/Caregivers
ECLC	Physical Health and Wellness
ECLC	Public Preschool
English Language Learners/Refugee or Immigrant Populations	Special Education
Family Providers	Workforce Development
Funders/Philanthropic Partners	

2021 inputs and PDG implementation

- Colorado early childhood landscape has been impacted by...
 1. Pandemic
 2. Stimulus funds
 3. Legislation
 - Universal Preschool
 - Department of Early Childhood

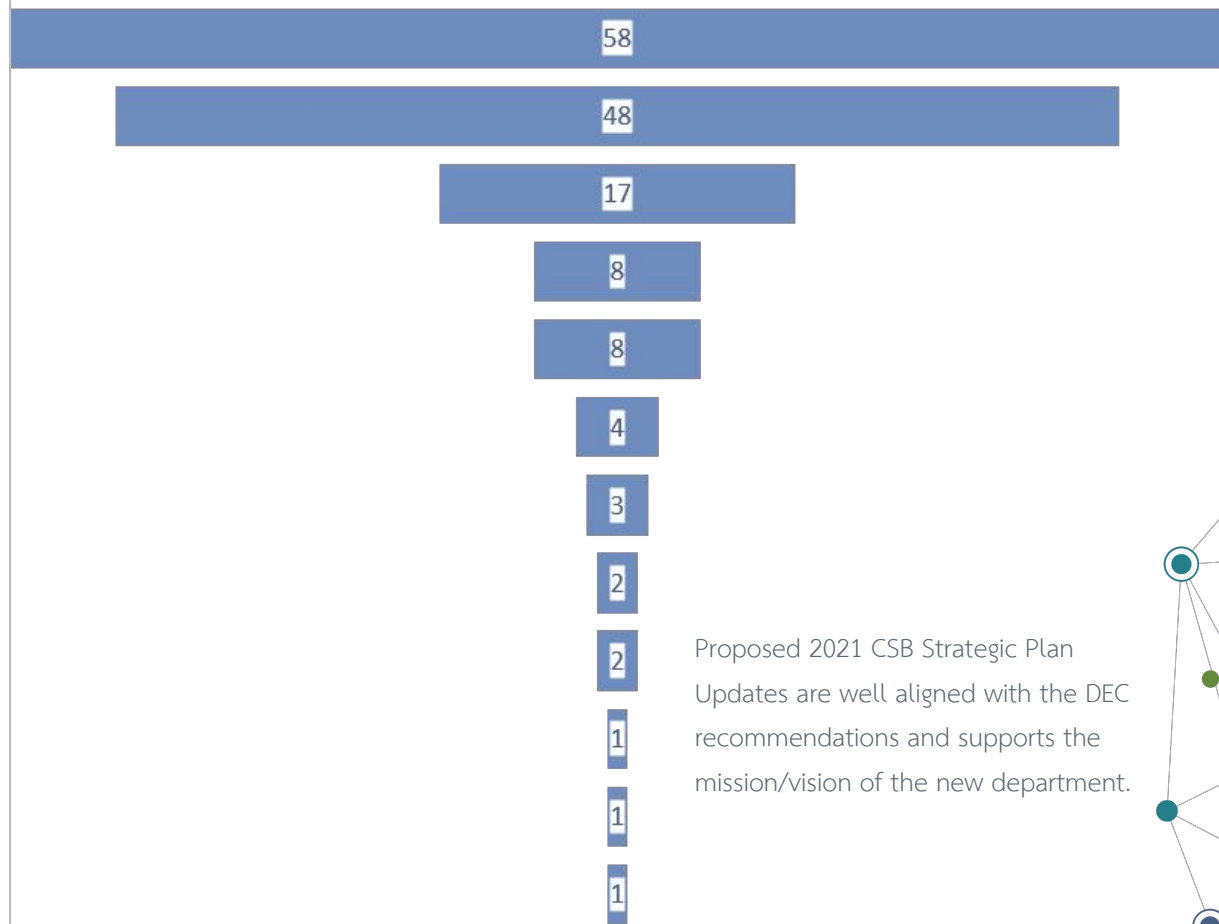
Department of Early Childhood (DEC)

- In June 2021, HB21-1304 established the state Department of Early Childhood (DEC) and required the creation of a Transition Plan to be presented to the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC), the Governor, and the Joint Budget Committee of the Colorado General Assembly.
- July 1, 2022 – Launch of DEC



DEC Recommendations and CSB Strategies

- The Department of Early Childhood should adopt the mission, vision, values,...
- Beginning in July 2022, the Colorado Preschool Program/Early Childhood At...
- To address funding challenges identified by families and providers, the...
- To inform decisions for children in Colorado, the Department of Early Childhood should: Collect data that provides additional information on syste...
- The Department of Early Childhood should prioritize supporting the growth...
- To facilitate meaningful advice, consultation, and collaboration about...
- As the agency that will continue to administer and oversee IDEA, Part B, CDE...
- Under an Executive Director, with significant experience in early childhood an...
- The Department of Early Childhood should establish close collaboration with...
- The Early Childhood Leadership Commission should serve in a key advisory role to the leadership of DEC, as well as continuing its advisory capacity to state...
- The Department of Early Childhood should acquire the legislative authority...
- By July 2025, the Department of Early Childhood and the Early Childhood...



Proposed 2021 CSB Strategic Plan Updates are well aligned with the DEC recommendations and supports the mission/vision of the new department.

Final report with recommended updates to the CSB SP

- Recommended updates to the strategies were informed by
 - 1) data from the ECE landscape,
 - 2) ongoing needs assessment activities,
 - 3) current early childhood environment, and
 - 4) a response to continuous quality improvement.

22 PDG funded and 10 non-PDG funded strategies are recommended for update.

27 strategies remain unchanged in the Strategic Plan.

2 new strategies are recommended for inclusion.

Recommended new strategies



6.2.7 Recruitment and Retention. Update the Early Childhood Workforce 2020 plan to support the recruitment and retention of early care and education professionals from diverse backgrounds and who speak the language and reflect the cultures of children in care.



6.2.8 Pipeline Opportunities. Explore and expand access to early childhood apprenticeship and peer mentoring programs, including providing concurrent enrollment apprenticeship opportunities for high school students to gain work experience in ECE settings.

Endorsement of Updates



Thank You

Please visit our website and follow us on twitter for more information about our research and access to our many free resources.

Or contact us

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Legislative Updates

Bill Jaeger - Colorado Children's Campaign



ECLC Subcommittee Updates

Susan Steele

ECLC Subcommittee Updates

- Program Quality and Alignment Subcommittee
 - ACTION: Consider Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Working Group
- Data Subcommittee
- Communications Subcommittee
- Early Childhood Workforce Development Subcommittee



State Agency Updates and Legislative Priorities

Pamela Harris

State Agency Updates and Legislative Priorities

- Colorado Department of Human Services
 - Office of Early Childhood
- Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing
- Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment



Break



Public Comment

Susan Steele

Public Comment

- Each speaker may take up to three (3) minutes to make his or her comments. This time constraint may be modified by the ECLC Co-Chairs.
- Any opinions, advice, statements, services, offers, or other information or content expressed or made available by stakeholders or members of the public during public comment does not constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the ECLC.



Draft Universal Preschool Recommendations Discussion

Nasha Patel - Watershed Advisors

Recommendation 1: Building and Strengthening Early Childhood Infrastructure

To achieve the goal of a universally available preschool program that helps to prepare all children for school and beyond, Colorado should address its infrastructure needs, including leadership, capacity, workforce, resources, and more. **Colorado should also capitalize on this opportunity for innovation and consider ways to strengthen the entire birth to 5+ system.**

In order to realize this goal, stakeholders emphasized the importance of investing in an infrastructure with:

- 1) Local leads empowered and charged to solve local challenges, foster partnerships, create alignment across all local entities, and allocate funding equitably across providers in their communities.
- 2) A demonstrated commitment from the Department of Early Childhood to provide resources to local leads and communities and to ensure that Colorado's aligned early childhood vision is executed successfully across the state.

Recommendation 1a: Local Leads

Local leads should be the Department of Early Childhood's partners in each area of the state to help organize the local early childhood landscape, **create innovative solutions to meet the needs of their communities**, and serve as the singular local level point of contact on early childhood in their community.

- Local leads should bring community partners together **and establish partnerships** to build a unified, long-term early childhood community plan and to request state-administered early childhood dollars in alignment with that plan. **Local leads should work with all local partners and adhere to DEC guidelines to ensure all voices are at the table.**
- Local leads should be selected through a rigorous application process conducted by DEC, and applications should demonstrate buy-in from other local partners **(e.g. through letters of support from community partners)**.
 - DEC should select the best fit entity to fulfill these duties and hold such entities accountable to fulfill the charge.
 - Any public agency (e.g., a county) or Colorado based nonpublic organization (e.g., an ECC) could apply, **including newly formed organizations, strategic partnerships between organizations, or other locally determined innovations.**

Recommendation 1b: Department of Early Childhood's Role

DEC should clearly define the scope of authority and expectations for local leads, collaborate with them as implementation partners, fully support them, and create an accountability mechanism with clearly delineated responsibilities for them.

- As part of overseeing local leads, DEC should provide contracts, partnerships, training, technical assistance, and resources to local leads, promote collaboration and collective learning, and elevate examples of success from Colorado and nationally.
 - DEC should support each local lead in line with their needs and resource them to achieve self-sufficiency over time.
- If a community is unable to identify an appropriate local lead, DEC should fulfill these responsibilities itself or through another partner.

DEC should also establish a statewide vision for early childhood and align all funding, initiatives, and efforts toward achieving it.

Infrastructure Feedback

- Emphasize that that the local lead must work with all local partners.
- DEC should set guardrails or requirements to make sure funds are equitably distributed in all communities without bias.
- Local lead application should be rigorous and require community buy in.
- Ensure that the local lead's role is comprehensive and defined enough that providers and families still don't have to go to multiple entities (e.g., clarifying they are responsible for birth and beyond, so families don't have to go to counties for CCCAP)
- Emphasize that existing infrastructure should be leveraged to reduce duplication of efforts
- Concern that some communities will not have sufficient resources to fulfill the role of a local lead.
- Questions about how money flows and what money the local lead is responsible for distributing.
- Consideration if multiple entities or a partnership could serve as a local lead.
- Desire for there to be a needs assessment done to ensure local leads get a full picture of the challenges they need to address.

Recommendation 2: Universal Preschool Application

DEC should work to develop a single, unified application for families to access universal preschool **and comprehensive early childhood services** that is equitable and streamlines the enrollment and eligibility process for both families and early childhood providers.

This application should:

- **Include all publicly-funded, comprehensive early childhood services from birth to school aged.**
- Be designed with the user experience in mind and offer families a simple and engaging interface.
- Collect only as much information from families as necessary for universal preschool enrollment.
 - Families who need additional funding should also be able to fill out information to determine eligibility for other services.
 - There should be easily integratable and interoperable technology that verifies eligibility for additional funding by checking against other programs families may already be eligible for or utilizing

DEC should develop an implementation plan with all necessary partners to ensure that at a minimum this application is functional for universal preschool by 2023.

Application Feedback

- Ensure application includes comprehensive early childhood services
- Concern about indicating a phased approach to expanding application for comprehensive service. Should set a vision and then DEC should create implementation plan.
- Make it clear that if a family just wants universal preschool, it will be easy for them to access just that.
- Ensure that it is clear to families that they can access more than just universal preschool through the application and that they understand their options.
- Local communities should be able to adapt application to fit the needs of their community or any additional programming in their region.

Recommendation 3: Eligibility and Prioritization for Funding

DEC should work with stakeholders and experts to create a base rate for universal preschool and additional adjustments or incentives to ensure access for all children that can build upon the base rate.

This rate must balance the tensions between universally funding quality for 10 hours a week and providing additional hours for Colorado's children with greatest needs.

These additional adjustments can include:

- Weighting for underserved populations, including children experiencing risk factors, dual language learners, children in foster care, children experiencing homelessness, and children receiving special education services.
- Regional considerations such as economies of scale in rural areas.
- Potential for half-day or full-day spots.
- Any other additional incentives such as teacher qualifications, implementation of mixed delivery, care for infants and toddlers, and quality.

Recommendation 3: Eligibility and Prioritization for Funding (Cont.)

In the process of determining eligibility and prioritization, DEC should also ensure:

- Current Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) funding is integrated into universal preschool funding, and, **at a minimum**, total funding for preschool does not drop below current levels, including keeping current funding for in-need three year old access consistent.
- The universal preschool rate is not tied to the school finance formula and reflects differences in risk factors, regional needs, and special education services.
- The universal preschool rate is kept stable or increases over time to support a reliable system.
- There is a plan for funding allocation in times of scarcity and excess, including how to ensure the available targeted funds are allocated to meet family needs.

When allocating additional funding for full-day services, DEC should review the current CPP risk factors, needs of the state, and national standards as a starting point to determine eligibility to ensure students who are eligible for additional services do not lose that access.

Eligibility and Prioritization Feedback

- Need for clarification around the fact that this is eligibility and prioritization for additional hours as the universal preschool legislation guarantees every child 10 hours of preschool per week
- Desire for clarification around whether total funding for CPP wont drop or whether per-child won't drop.
- Set a floor rather than a ceiling funding—state that current level of funding should be a minimum.
- When risk factors are reviewed, the variance of need across different types of communities should be considered
- Recommendation to add incentives for programs who provide wrap around services
- Consider prioritization for single parent families
- DEC should use, and make available for others to use, data to make decisions about prioritizations.

Recommendation 4: Quality and Evaluation

To support a **high-quality universal, voluntary preschool program**, DEC should:

- Review standards from CPP, National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), Head Start, and guidance on any new federal preschool funding to find opportunities to simplify and align as it designs standards for the universal preschool program (e.g., screening referrals, ratios, class size, teacher degrees)
- Contract with an external evaluator to measure the success of universal preschool, including measuring child outcomes, and provide recommendations to improve the program in future years.

To create a **quality, unified early childhood system**, DEC should:

- Establish a single set of standards for the quality experience children should be having in classrooms regardless of funding source **or setting**, and align resources and supports to help local communities achieve it;
- Consider a phased approach to quality to support all communities as they seek to scale quality, due to the current constraints of the system;
- Create free and widely accessible professional development on the early learning and development guidelines; and
- Work with local leads and eligible providers to build capacity to meet quality standards.

Throughout these processes, DEC should engage with a representative group of stakeholders, including all types of providers, to inform program standards and quality improvement.

Quality and Evaluation Feedback

- Concern that the definitions of quality will continue to not be inclusive of different types of programs
- Need for clarification on role of DEC versus local lead in quality
- Quality and evaluation methods should not be burdensome for providers.
- Desire for further stakeholder engagement as DEC takes on these processes.
- Data from assessments should be offered to educators so that they can use for individualized improvement.
- Supports for quality should be multilingual so all providers have the opportunity to improve their quality.
- Social emotional learning and growth should be part of defining quality.
- Many recommendations on tools or standards that DEC should consider as it sets the requirements for universal preschool.
 - DEC should consider recommending the implementation of a research-validated, comprehensive curriculum and its companion comprehensive child assessment tool.
 - DEC should support formal training on whatever quality system they implement
 - DEC should consider universal vision, hearing, and health screenings as a quality standard
- There were diverse opinions about what constitutes quality and what DEC's role should be in establishing quality requirements

Recommendation 5: Workforce

To successfully launch universal preschool by 2023, DEC will require a strong early childhood workforce. DEC should build on the ongoing work of the ECLC, Office of Early Childhood, Department of Higher Education (CDHE), and Department of Education (CDE), and should:

- Immediately focus funding resources on ensuring there are enough workforce members available to work on day one of universal preschool implementation and that they are appropriately compensated, while also ensuring continued access for all ages before preschool and addressing shortages across the age continuum.
- Review the current workforce qualification pathways to create a simple process for the workforce and providers to attain credentials and qualifications.
 - Ensure the process for joining the early childhood workforce is welcoming and there are minimal barriers to entry, including being thoughtful about those who speak additional languages.
 - Consider how to recruit and incentivize different populations (e.g., high school students, teachers from other countries, parents) and reduce the barriers that prevent them from joining the workforce.
 - Consider an induction model that could decrease the time it takes to get a teacher in a classroom by using an onboarding process to meet regulations and requirements.

Recommendation 5: Workforce (Continued)

- Clearly articulate the most recently revised competencies needed by the workforce, align the system of training, and review regulatory barriers to promote attainment of these competencies through identified partners, including higher education pathways.
- Develop and share evidence-based strategies in conjunction with leads from CDHE, CDE, and the Department of Labor and other organizations to sustainably recruit, compensate, develop, and incentivize new members of the workforce.
 - Align available supports for teachers across programs, contracts, and funding streams, and fund additional evidence-based supports.
 - Implement strategies to increase compensation, with a goal to reach a liveable wage (e.g., incentivizing providers to increase providing grants that help compensate the workforce, paying signing bonuses, supporting shared services, and other innovations to increase availability of benefits).
 - Create free and widely accessible professional development on the Colorado early learning and development guidelines once reviewed and adopted by DEC.
 - Increase access to professional development to attain these competencies through freely available training, reduced bureaucracy, and increased options for stackable, credit-bearing and work-based learning opportunities.

Workforce Feedback

- Strong emphasis on making sure that **all** members of the early childhood workforce are getting paid a liveable wage
- Desire to make sure that language is clear so that we don't draw people out of infant and toddler care into preschool classrooms
- Need to focus on supports for the entire workforce, not just preschool teachers
- Add in language about importance of career navigators for early childhood professionals.
- Add in language about the importance of coaching and mentoring
- Concern about equity between different types of providers' pay
- Need to balance high quality credentials for workforce with supply, so that there are enough staff for all classrooms.
- DEC should ensure to be both inclusive of opening the field and give the workforce the opportunity of being on the pathways to degree

Recommendation 6: Special Education

The Transition Working Group's recommendations related to special education as detailed in the Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan, including that the Colorado Department of Education should continue to administer IDEA Part B, are also relevant for the implementation of universal preschool.

While this report does not suggest any programmatic or structural changes related to accountability and oversight of special education, it does recommend two critical steps DEC can take to build and strengthen inclusivity and supports for children with disabilities, including:

1. Considering additional funding for children with disabilities in the universal preschool program rate; and
2. Ensuring strong collaboration between DEC and CDE on special education service delivery, including that both agencies support the implementation of inclusive classrooms for children with special needs.

Recommendation 6: Special Education (Continued)

To best support children with special needs, DEC should:

- Establish clear expectations for supporting children **with special needs**, consulting with stakeholders with requisite representation and expertise
- Create an interagency agreement(s) with CDE as soon as possible to:
 - Define the roles and responsibilities of the two departments, local education agencies, and all types of preschool providers;
 - Ensure data collection and sharing such that all critical data can be disaggregated;
 - Support programs and communities to provide inclusive, individualized, meaningful, culturally relevant, active and participatory learning for all children;
 - Determine how community-based programs providers will be held accountable for providing access and supports in implementing a mixed-delivery preschool program.
 - Ensure the new preschool program's requirements are integrated with the existing requirements local education agencies have for the provision of special education services;
 - Ensure all federal regulations are complied with;
 - Eliminate or reduce duplicative regulations; and
 - Ensure they are addressing all legislative requirements for universal preschool

Special Education Feedback

- Make it clear in this section that the recommendation is only about special education.
- Since the law calls for mixed delivery, DEC should ensure with CDE and other partners that all laws and regulations are complied with in all settings where children with special needs are served.
- Desire for universal developmental screening to strengthen the system around child find, referrals, and transitions.
- Desire for increased training on inclusive practices for special education service delivery so that professionals are well equipped to care for all children.

General Feedback

- Use tighter language when referring to children with special needs versus special populations
- Ensure equity across age groups. Make strong references to comprehensive services from birth to five and beyond
- Use the moment of universal preschool and these recommendations to create change for the entire early childhood system where possible
- Ensure these recommendations are compatible with potential federal investments where possible
- More clearly delineate between when recommendations relate to universal preschool versus the entire birth to 5+ system.
- Need to ensure that DEC begins planning and implementation immediately to allow communities time for ramp up before universal preschool starts



Co-Chairs' Next Steps, Final Thoughts and Adjourn

Pamela Harris

ECLC

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Next Meeting:

January 11, 2022

9:30 am - 12:30 pm



Thank you!