



April 22, 2021

9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Google Hangouts Link:

<https://meet.google.com/ive-cmxz-vcd>

Or by phone: (470)268-2253 PIN: 837 068 151#

Meeting materials: <http://www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org/meeting-information>

AGENDA

Meeting Objectives:

- Approve the February 25, 2021 and April 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes
 - Discuss Universal Preschool Planning Next Steps
 - Identify opportunities for continued partnership with Colorado Early Childhood Councils
 - Provide feedback on the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan
 - Listen to Early Childhood Leadership Commission Subcommittees updates
 - Hear comments from the Early Childhood Community
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| 9:30-9:35am | Welcome, Introductions and Approve Minutes (Pamela Harris) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACTION: Approve the February 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes• ACTION: Approve the April 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes• REVIEW: State Agency Updates (written updates can be viewed here) |
| 9:35-9:55am | Legislative and Budget Updates (Bill Jaeger, Colorado Children's Campaign) |
| 9:55-10:25am | Universal Preschool Planning/New State Agency Recommendation - Updates and Next Steps (Pamela Harris) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universal Preschool Policy Discussion Guide• ECLC Recommendation on Governance and Letter to Early Childhood Community |
| 10:25-10:55am | Early Childhood Council Panel: Learning from Communities in Colorado (Tom Massey) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome Maegan Lokteff, Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance Executive Director• Discussion with Early Childhood Council Leaders |
| 10:55-11:05am | Break |
| 11:05-11:15am | Public Comment (Tom Massey) |
| 11:15-11:45am | Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan (Stacey Kennedy, Todd Jorgensen, Carin Rosa, Tamara Schmidt) |

- 11:45-12:00pm Governor's Office Updates (Scott Groginsky)
- 12:00-12:25pm Subcommittee Updates (Susan Steele)
- Program Quality and Alignment Subcommittee
 - [Subcommittee Norms and Guiding Questions](#)
 - Data Subcommittee
 - [2021 Areas of Opportunity Indicators Report](#) - Next Steps
 - Communication Subcommittee
 - [2021 Communications Plan](#)
 - Early Childhood Workforce Development
 - New Co-Chair Recommendation
- 12:25-12:30pm Co-Chairs' Next Steps, Final Thoughts and Adjourn (Susan Steele)
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ECLC 2021 Meeting Schedule

- February 25, 2021
 - April 22, 2021
 - June 24, 2021
 - August 26, 2021
 - October 28, 2021
 - December 16, 2021
-

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 June 24, 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 Meeting
February 25, 2021 9:30-12:30pm
Google Hangouts

MINUTES

Meeting Objectives:

- Approve Meeting Minutes from December 17, 2020 Meeting
 - Identify Next Steps to Continue Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Conversations
 - Provide Feedback on the Colorado Shines Framework and ECE Competencies
 - Learn about the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant Opportunity
 - Discuss State Agency Legislative Priorities
 - Hear from the Early Childhood Community during Public Comment
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Attendance: Susan Steele, Angie Paccione, Tracy Miller, Rachel Hutson, Ida Rhodes, Jai Scott, Pamela Harris, Heather Craiglow, Kate Reinemund, Sue Renner, Adeeb Khan, Happy Haynes, Melissa Colman, Rebecca Kantor, Jeanne McQueeney, Jehan Benton-Clark, Anne-Marie Braga, Jeff Kuhr, Ryan Beiser, Tom Massey, Mary Alice Cohen, Kristina Heyl

Welcome and Approve Minutes

Susan Steele welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining. Melissa Colman moved to approve the December 17, 2020 minutes, Kate Reinemund seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Susan thanked Tracy Miller for her work as a commissioner and welcomed Rachel Hutson as the new commissioner representative for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Rachel described her role as the Children, Youth, and Families Branch Director and Block Grant Director for the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant. She is excited about the alignment of her work and the priorities of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission.

Business Meeting

- **2020 Early Childhood Leadership Commission Annual Report**
Susan discussed the success of the 2020 Early Childhood Leadership Commission Annual Report Reception. She noted the great turnout and strong support from the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, highlighting their appreciation and the alignment of their work and the work of the Commission. The report is posted on the Early Childhood Leadership Commission's website. Susan also mentioned the importance of the work and accomplishments of the ECLC subcommittees. This year will bring many opportunities including planning for Proposition EE; working on equity, diversity and inclusion; continuing work on workforce development; continuing work with providers and families.
- **ACTION: Review Waiver Updates from the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County and the Mesa County Partnership for Children and Families**
Susan commented on the importance of early childhood council waivers as an opportunity to pilot and try new ideas. There were two waiver updates for commissioners to review, one from the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County and one from the Mesa County Partnership for Children and Families. Both are posted on the Commission's website.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion - Continued Discussion/Action Steps

Susan reminded everyone that in addition to the Commission creating its Equity Statement, the subcommittees have been working to include equity, diversity and inclusion in their work on an on-going basis. Commissioners were asked to take the PDIS course *Recognizing the Impact of Bias on Early Childhood Professionals*. Susan introduced Heather Craiglow to discuss the course and address how it relates to the Commission's Equity Statement and Universal Preschool Policy Discussion Guide.

Heather explained the objectives of the course as defining conscious and unconscious bias, describing how brains support unconscious bias, explaining the importance of self-awareness in combating unconscious bias, identifying vulnerable decision points and how to address them, and describing strategies to reduce bias. The course focuses on family and community partnerships.

Heather asked the commissioners to reflect on and discuss what the course meant to them. The course developers were also present and ready to receive feedback. The group discussed ideas such as making the course mandatory for child care providers because of its relevancy to their work; creating a discussion guide that could accompany the course; and developing an additional course that could continue learnings from the foundational course. Additional suggestions for the PDIS course can be sent to Jen McDonald, Manager, Training and ID Team, jennifer.mcdonald@state.co.us.

Next, Heather shared a slide was from the Colorado Workforce Development Council's Talent Equity Agenda. Colorado is ranked 12th nationally on overall prosperity of the state's residents but ranked 37th nationally when it comes to racial disparities between white residents and residents of color. Heather discussed the impact of interview processes and questioned how organizations could do a better job.

Heather discussed the definitions of identity, diversity, justice, and activism for reference and reflection as people review the Early Childhood Leadership Commission's Equity Statement and Preschool Policy Discussion Guide. She suggested taking time at each Commission, subcommittee, and working group meeting to discuss equity, diversity and inclusion work and also for commissioners to share the work with their own organizations.

The members discussed using the ECLC's Equity Statement to create a set of guiding principles for equity, diversity and inclusion to continue to move toward action.

Public Comment and Member Updates

- Jane West is an early childhood mental health clinician and consultant. She discussed the Colorado EC 0-5 diagnostic system and the need for public awareness. The Early Childhood Mental Health Public Outreach Project has been developed by the Colorado Department of Human Services using CARES Act dollars during the spring 2021. Jane will be providing presentations on understanding the prevalence rates and diagnosis of depression and anxiety in infants, toddlers and preschoolers and how the pandemic has impacted anxiety in children, families and professionals. She will discuss the system of diagnosis and how to recognize red flags. The goal is to raise awareness and to carve deep, effective referral paths for communities. Jane West can be contacted at heartofthewestcounseling@gmail.com.
- Katie Facchinello shared two links in the chat:
On Monday, March 22, at 12:00-1:30 pm MT, FrameWorks Institute is offering a free overview

Patrick Potyondy, Legislative Manager for the Office of Early Childhood, reviewed current legislative priorities for the office and Department of Human Services

- The [Colorado Children's Trust Fund Board Updates](#) would expand the membership of the board from 9 to 17 members and also expand some of the duties and abilities of the board to make recommendations to the Governor and study problems they would like to address in legislation.
- [Early Intervention Evaluation Responsibility Changes](#), part of budget request R-06, would transfer responsibility for early intervention evaluations. Hopefully the Joint Budget Committee will sponsor the legislation. The goal is to transfer authority for doing evaluations from the Department of Education to the Department of Human Services. The Colorado Department of Human Services is the lead agency for part C federal funding and should have direct oversight over EI evaluations.
- Request R-18: [Adjust Market Rate Study Frequency](#) would adjust the frequency at which the study is completed. Currently, the market rate study for child care is completed every year in Colorado per state statute, however, federal law states it only needs to be completed every three years. The suggestion is that Colorado only completes the study once every three years moving forward.
- Budget request R-03 includes [Supports for the Early Childhood Educator Workforce](#). It would allow for a little over \$1 million providing approximately 500-600 early childhood professionals with financial assistance for education and training in early childhood education.
- Request R12 - [CCCAP Early Childhood Educator Salary Increase](#) would allow for \$3 million to increase salaries of early childhood educators who work for providers who participate in CCCAP and have a Colorado Shines rating of 3 to 5. It would incentivize providers to accept CCCAP and improve their ratings in Colorado Shines. The benefit would affect 400 providers and well over 2000 child care workers.
- Request R14 - [Nurse Home Visitor Program Spending Authority](#) is a \$500,000.00 spending authority request. The request aligns with a previous legislative bill and would give the authority to spend existing accumulated Tobacco Master Settlement funds.

The Joint Budget Committee will be hearing these items and making decisions on March 5, 2021.

The members asked about the market rate study and why the move to every 3 years was being considered, noting it could have a negative impact on providers as the market shifts. Mary Alice stated the office is working to address concerns about collecting data in real time and to improve CCCAP issues using additional funding streams.

Colorado Department of Higher Education:

The department provided a written update available to view on the [Early Childhood Leadership Commission website](#).

Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing:

Tom Massey shared that the Department of Health Care and Financing presented its \$12.3 billion 2021-2022 fiscal year budget to the Joint Budget Committee as part of their SMART Act requirements. They now insure 1 in 4 Coloradans and saw a significant increase during the pandemic. More information is available at their [Legislative Resource Center](#) and [Health First Colorado Budget Basics document](#). The [Health Care Policy and Financing 2021 Legislative Agenda](#) includes telemedicine policy refinements, a proposal to expand the current drug importation

program to include countries in addition to Canada if federal policies change to allow, initiatives to add remote supports to home and community based services, redesigns to case managements, and establishing a demonstration of need and technical changes for skilled nursing facilities. The department just released their 2020 Annual Report illustrating the many ways the department serves Coloradans every day.

Colorado Department of Education:

Melissa Colman shared that the Department of Education's legislative priorities have been largely focused on the Covid-19 pandemic response. The Department is working closely with the legislature on Covid-19 response for education, including how to coordinate state level efforts that state legislators are interested in initiating, along with federal Covid-19 emergency response funding. They are working to find budget savings related to the pandemic to ensure they have adequate state funding for all of their work, especially funding related to Colorado READ Act early literacy and preschool work, work towards ensuring quality schools, educational equity and preserving funding and resources for students who have been historically underserved. The department is also supporting the Part C early intervention transition work with CDHS.

Colorado Department of Public Health:

Rachel Hutson shared information on the Colorado Department of Public Health's legislative and budget priorities. She mentioned the Opioid Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund, and a clean-up bill that would allow for more entities to be able to purchase from the Fund, which would have a significant impact on behavioral health and substance abuse. The Department will also be continuing the reduction in their marijuana education campaign for one additional year, and is using other resources to continue to fund the Forward Together Campaign which aims to build the skills of adults to create connected relationships with young people.

The department is requesting approximately \$6 million to create a new health equity grant program within the Office of Health Equity and to build on and enhance the existing work that happens through that office. The funds will be used for increased staffing and operations, strategic planning, data collection and dissemination and best practices, and coordinating with other state agencies and local governments, and engaging the community. The department is also requesting legislative approval to implement an advanced payment system, which could remove barriers for smaller community-based organizations to navigate the procurement processes and apply for grants or funding opportunities.

Finally, Covid-19 has illuminated gaps and weaknesses in the Department's public health infrastructure. They are requesting \$27 million in annual funds to strengthen that infrastructure and prepare for the next public health crisis. Much of the funding will be used for strengthening local public health agencies' infrastructure and allocation for disease reporting systems, expanding immunization education and outreach, improving technology infrastructure, increasing lab capacity, improving the ability to do contact tracing, disease control, and expanding laboratory and emergency preparedness services.

Legislative Updates

Bill Jaeger shared the [Children's Campaign's Budget and Legislative Items Tracker](#), focused on early childhood related items. It will be continued to be updated in real time during the legislative session.

House Bills:

- HB 21-1006 is a proposed grant program to increase access to food, enrichment, care and

academic support for children who are in districts that are on a four day week schedule.

- HB 21-1007 is a bill for the effective use and expanded access to state apprenticeships.
- HB 21-1010 would require the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Colorado Department of Education to convene a workgroup to examine barriers to entry and the importance of a diverse workforce.
- HB 21-1029 is a proposal to pull back some evidence-based curriculum uses that are used with per pupil intervention money under the READ Act to allow more flexibility around what is used.
- HB 21-1097 proposes legislation to establish a Behavioral Health Administration led by the Colorado Department of Human Services.
- HB 21-1106 would require firearms to be securely stored when not in use. Accidental discharge is identified in the Childhood Fatality Report from the Department of Public Health and Environment every year.
- HB 21-1129 would allow for flexibility related to Covid-19 around teacher reading training requirements for K-3.

Senate Bills:

- SB 21-013 introduces legislation with added resources to support the disruption in education and learning loss.
- SB 21-014 is a bill focused on changing the way CCCAP funds are allocated out to counties.
- SB 21-025 is a bill about family planning services.
- SB 21-027 would increase access to diapers and other essential supplies for babies. The bill would support general fund dollars for non-profit outreach and diaper distribution around the state.
- SB 21-053 provides for work around keeping programs and school districts whole in spite of declined enrollment and looking ahead at what the next year or two will mean for kids who were not enrolled in kindergarten and preschool this year.
- SB 21-101 via sunset legislation, updates the scope of practice for dental hygienists, including continuation of services that expand access to dental care around the state.
- There are also several pieces of legislation related to families and children who live in immigrant families as well as barriers for immigrant families to be able to fully participate in our economy. SB 21-077 would remove requirements that state agencies verify legal presence before issuing a professional license or certificate. This would impact many FFN providers who complete training and want to become licensed family child care home providers but have previously been prohibited because a child care license is considered a commercial license and currently requires proof of legal presence. Additional future legislation is expected to remove even more barriers.

Anticipated legislation:

- More conversation is expected around tax reform, tax credits and deductions identified in the state auditor's report as not achieving their intent, as well as proposals around closing various corporate tax credits and deductions identified in the report and targeting those dollars to the earned income tax credit and creating a child tax credit. These are two of the strongest anti child poverty strategies we have as a state and at the federal level. There has been good conversation about the best use of tax credit to target families with children.
- Additionally, more conversation and legislation is expected around behavioral health and behavior health investments, including early childhood mental health.
- The Children's Campaign is monitoring conversations around family child care homes and the local regulatory burdens that extend beyond state child care licensing. They anticipate legislation to try and address the additional regulatory burdens that makes it hard to provide

licensed family child care when there are local regulations that go even further than state child care licensing regulations.

Governor's Office Updates

Scott Groginsky thanked the Commission for inviting him to speak and for its support of issues, policies and initiatives that support young children. He discussed the many priorities of the Governor's office. These priorities include legislative budget priorities, planning for Universal Preschool implementation, state and federal child care stimulus policies with relief grants and Emerging and Expanding grants for child care programs, establishing a state plan for the Child Care and Development Fund portion of the Federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Stabilization Act, planning for the potential new federal stimulus which may include \$40 million specifically for child care and some child and child care tax credits, distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine, continued progress on the Preschool Development Grant Strategic Plan, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant, and recent activity around Home Visiting.

Scott also thanked the Commission for their support of the Governor's budget and for their engagement in public policy and fiscal issues. It includes support for the early childhood workforce and facilities, home visiting, early intervention, and mental health supports. The budget represents a commitment to ensure the state's early health systems are prepared for the large increase of 4 year olds who will need Universal Preschool in the coming years by strengthening child care capacity and quality and helping address early childhood systems and services gaps. The Governor is also excited about the \$5 million dollar proposal for employer funded child care as part of the state stimulus proposal released in the budget request in November 2020. Finally, the Governor's office is already beginning the planning for fiscal year 2023. The Commission thanked the Governor for his advocacy and support of early childhood and family programs.

ECLC Areas of Opportunity - 2021 Indicators Report

Heather Matthews spoke about the upcoming 2021 Areas of Opportunity Indicators Report. She anticipates the report being finished in the next couple of weeks. She reminded the Commission that the ECLC Data Subcommittee was charged by the Commission to identify indicators to track the 3 Areas of Opportunity, which were identified in the [2019 Areas of Opportunity Report](#). The Areas of Opportunity are:

1. Improve access to high-quality early care and education for all families.
2. Elevate the early childhood workforce to ensure coordinated career pathways and appropriate compensation
3. Support improved family health and economic security through a two-generation approach.

Recently, the Data Subcommittee took more time to dig deeper and develop more concrete indicators for the 3rd Area of Opportunity. The 2021 Indicators Report provides updates to the 1st and 2nd Areas of Opportunity, baseline data for the 3rd Area of Opportunity, an overview of data advancements in the past year and other relevant context of the early childhood environment, and data development opportunities. Covid-19 will have an impact on current and future data. The report also includes key findings for each Area of Opportunity. The Data Subcommittee hopes to engage the Commission in deeper conversation around the report, which will be available soon!

Co-Chairs' Final Thoughts and Adjourn

The Co-Chairs shared final remarks and thanked everyone for joining. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

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Early Childhood Leadership Commission April 6, 2021 ~ 11:00am-12:00pm

MINUTES

Meeting Objectives:

- Review the ECLC planning process and recommendations for Universal Preschool
- Discuss the ECLC Universal Preschool recommendations and consider a vote for endorsement
- Hear comments from the early childhood community

Attendees: Ryan Beiser, Jehan Benton-Clark, Anne-Marie Braga, Jai Scott, Heather Craiglow, Melissa Colsman, Angie Paccione, Rachel Hutson, Jeanne McQueeney, Ida Rhodes, Kate Reinemund, George Welsh, Susan Steele, Pamela Harris, Adeeb Khan, Happy Haynes, Sue Renner, Jeff Kuhr, Rebecca Kantor, Kristina Heyl

Welcome

Susan Steele called the meeting to order at 11:00am.

Overview of Process and Recommendations

Susan explained that a work group of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission has been meeting for several weeks to review current Universal Preschool Policy conversations throughout the early childhood community and to decide what role the Commission should play as the federally-recognized early childhood state advisory council for Colorado responsible for monitoring efforts to enhancing systems alignment; developing strategies to increase access, quality, and equity of services and supports; and advising and making recommendations to the Governor's office, General Assembly, and the state departments.

In November 2020, voters supported funding for a Universal Preschool Program in Colorado. As a result, a thoughtful process began on how to implement Universal Preschool in the most efficient and effective way in order to serve kids and families while taking advantage of opportunities for increased efficiency and alignment across the continuum of education. The Commission created the Universal Preschool Policy Discussion Guide to call out the most important components for Universal Preschool including equity to children, the workforce, and communities; a mixed delivery system; streamlined administrative burden for programs and families; and more. The Children's Campaign and Early Milestones Colorado led an enormous effort to promote engagement and awareness with their Preschool Policy Leadership Committee, Preschool Policy Advisory Group and many additional stakeholder focus groups. These discussions highlighted the opportunity to look at the whole early childhood system and think about how to build on our state's successes to this point.

The ECLC work group talked through the collection of information and stakeholder input, listened to experts from around the country, worked with partners at the state agencies to ensure alignment, and developed a recommendation for the governance of Universal Preschool in Colorado to present to the Governor, Legislature, and state agencies.

Discussion of ECLC Universal Preschool Recommendations

Pamela walked through the recommendation, highlighting its focus on supporting young children, families, and the early childhood workforce. The recommendation incorporates the Early Childhood Colorado Framework domains of health and well-being, family support and education, and early learning and development, as well as the Universal Preschool Policy Discussion Guide "Must-Haves." It describes the opportunity and ability to connect, intersect, and align Universal Preschool with the whole early childhood system. The recommendation is for the creation of a new cabinet level state agency dedicated to early childhood that consolidates the various authorities, programs, and funding streams that currently exist across state agencies and focuses on a unified vision of comprehensive early childhood service delivery for all children birth to age five. It includes a planning year to develop a thoughtful transition with a comprehensive stakeholder input process. It also presents four categories of importance which include Child

and Family Centered Services, Streamlining Administrative Burden, Funding and Accountability, and Governance and Authority. The agency should be flexible and responsive to the needs of families, children, providers, and communities, and also have statutory authority with a policy-making board. A new cabinet level agency will elevate the importance of early care and education, provide new ways to partner and integrate across state agencies, and worked toward our shared vision that all children are valued, healthy, and thriving.

There was discussion as to whether a new state agency would replace or remove any current system oversight, add additional bureaucracy to an already complex system, or if it would instead better coordinate all early childhood programs throughout the state. There is value in each existing early childhood program, and this agency will help organize, align, and maximize all programs so they are not on separate paths. The agency will build on the successes that have already occurred by coordinating, aligning, and identifying efficiencies and innovations for the future while removing burdens on families and providers.

Dr. Angie Paccione motioned to approve the recommendation. Jeanne McQueeney seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Adeeb requested the addition of the statement, “The new state agency will be designed to innovate and use supporting agencies as needed to meet the needs of both public and private providers and create a thriving early childhood infrastructure.” After additional discussion, Angie amended her motion to approve the recommendation with the addition of this statement.

Commissioners expressed excitement for the long-term vision, stating that establishing a new department for early childhood would be a significant next step in better serving children and families.

Public Comment

Mathieu Aubuchon is Director of Elementary and Early Childhood Education for Westminster Schools and a representative for a group of public school early childhood administrators from across the state who meet as thought partners related to the increasing complex early childhood systems in Colorado. He thanked the Commission for their recommendation. Duplicate requirements and dual accountability systems across state agencies can be difficult to navigate. School districts are working to create a true P-3 system that helps to prepare young learners for success. Proposition EE brings hope but also has the potential to bring yet another funding entity and corresponding administrative requirements and oversight. The proposal to align all early childhood programs under a single state agency to oversee these funding streams allows for an opportunity for streamlining administrative requirements, blending of funding streams, and practical oversight of early childhood programs. Mat thanked the Commission for their leadership and foresight and offered to help in any way moving forward.

JonPaul Burden, Director for Exceptional Student Services in the Weld RE School District in Windsor, Colorado spoke on behalf of the Consortium of Special Education Directors who help inform legislators around the state on policies around special education. The Consortium works with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education to find efficiencies and streamline early childhood education processes. They support a single state agency, however, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires in federal statute that the State Education Agency (SEA) has the responsibility for entering all requirements for special education programs, and the SEA in Colorado is defined as the Department of Education. As programs are blending and braiding, it will be important to avoid violating this federal statute. With so many unknowns, this will need to be a consideration as well as the provision of care for special education students. The Consortium would like to be at the table as a partner when those discussions are occurring.

Vote for Endorsement

Kristina called role for each commissioner to cast a vote. 16 Commissioners voted in support of the recommendation; Melissa Colman (CDE), Anne-Marie Braga (CDHS) and Rachel Hutson (CDPHE) abstained; and one commissioner was not present. The motion passed at 11:55 am.

Co-Chairs' Next Steps, Final Thoughts and Adjourn

The commissioners thanked Pamela, Susan, and Kristina for leading the work around this recommendation, Scott Groginsky from the Governor's office, Bill Jaeger with the Colorado Children's Campaign, and the state agencies who have partnered and provided valuable input during the process. They also thanked the former commissioners who volunteered their time and expertise.

Despite many difficult challenges, the Covid-19 pandemic has become an opportunity to reimagine early care and education and to build a stronger system that supports all families. Although there is a lot of work ahead, everyone is dedicated to doing their best to ensure a new agency supports the families and communities of Colorado.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

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Federal Early Childhood Stimulus Funding

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act Funds

On April 8th, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) hosted a town hall, “Colorado's Early Childhood Strategies for the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act.”

- The town hall recording [can be found here](#).
- The town hall slides [can be found here](#).
- A questions and answer document from the town call [can be found here](#).
- More information about the stakeholder survey that informed uses for the funds in Colorado [can be found here](#).
- More information about each of the strategies [can be found here](#).

American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Funds

Colorado is anticipated to receive roughly \$513,704,516 million in early childhood funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act (a breakdown of the funds is available in the town hall slides linked above, on slide 21).

The Office of Early Childhood will be conducting stakeholder engagement on the ARP funds, to help determine strategies for use. This will include focus groups with key stakeholders, including Early Childhood Councils, county CCCAP administrators, child care providers, foundations and families.

Legislative Update

[Senate Bill 21-236](#), “Increase Capacity Early Childhood Care & Education,” has been introduced and will be heard in its first committee on Thursday, April 22. This bill adjusts the OEC’s sustainability grants program that was created during the 2020 Special Legislative Session so that the program can keep running smoothly. It also establishes four programs:

- The employer-based child care facility grant program, which will increase the supply of high-quality and accessible licensed child care as workers increasingly return to in-person operations in the wake of COVID-19;
- The early care and education recruitment and retention grant and scholarship program, which will help rebuild the early childhood workforce following the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for universal preschool;

- The child care teacher salary grant program, which will address the high number of early childhood educators who leave the field because of low pay; and
- The Community Innovation and Resilience for Care and Learning Equity (CIRCLE) grant program, which aims to address systemic challenges for early care and learning providers across Colorado that have been worsened as a result of the economic, social, and health impacts of COVID-19 by providing awards to CCDF-eligible providers and community-based organizations, such as Early Childhood Councils, to identify and implement transformational solutions to one of the identified focus areas: child care affordability, infant and toddler care, sustainable business practices, and equitable access to care.

Two additional bills continue to move through the legislative process. [House Bill 21-1248](#), focused on improving the Colorado Children's Trust Fund, unanimously passed out of its first committee. [Senate Bill 21-217](#), regarding Market Rate Adjustment, is sponsored by the Joint Budget Committee and is moving through the process along with the overall budget Long Bill.

Preschool Development Grant

PDG Progress Summary

The first year of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Renewal (PDG-R) concluded in December 2020. The [PDG Progress Summary](#) (attached) provides an overview of project milestones and a summary of activities that will be completed in 2021.

PLAYBook

The Preschool Development Grant team is excited to share a new resource, the PLAYBook!

The PLAYbook contains information and activities that anyone caring for young children – including parents, siblings, guardians, grandparents, babysitters, neighbors, and family friends - can use to prepare children to be successful when entering kindergarten. The PLAYbook contains activities and information that are designed to get caregivers thinking about building the child's skills in the locations where they spend time together, using what they may already have around their home through play.

Here you will find a digital version of the PLAYbook in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) to review and share. The PDF file is interactive, allowing users to take notes or use the checklists and interactive tools digitally! The PLAYbook can also be downloaded and printed.

We developed a [communication toolkit](#) to help you spread the word on The PLAYbook with those who care for young children. We are grateful for your commitment and partnership to ensuring Colorado's children are valued, healthy and thriving!

Please reach out to amanda.culbertson@state.co.us with any questions.

Colorado Shines Brighter Birth Through Five Strategic Plan 2020-2025

► Preschool Development Grant Strategy Progress

Goal 1: ALIGN AND COORDINATE SYSTEMS



OBJECTIVE 1.1: Make Data Informed Decisions		
STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<p>1.1.1 IT Solutions Roadmap. Implement the Office of Early Childhood’s Information Technology Solutions Roadmap through a multi-phase plan that: supports collaboration and communication; standardizes design for accessibility and usability; and provides transparency and security for publicly available data.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Division of Early Care and Learning completed the Salesforce Lightning Migration project and launched updates to the Child Care Provider Portal. The OEC Division of Community and Family Support systems completed a series of enhancements including changes to the early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) data base and the development of a new, online ECMHC referral form.</p>	<p>Launch the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System rebuild, modifications to CHATS to support the implementation of contract for slots, and enhancements to the child care licensing system. Continue to develop the early childhood mental health database, enhance Early Intervention system functionality, and increase reporting capability across Office of Early Childhood systems.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Develop a data warehousing solution to combine four early childhood systems: child care licensing/Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System, Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CHATS), Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System, and the Division of Community and Family Support data system.</p>
<p>1.1.3 Workforce Data System Modernization. Embark on data system modernization planning to address Office of Early Childhood business needs including stakeholder input, identification of needed improvements, quality assurance analyses, and the development of specific requirements for enhancement.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood partnered with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (CEAL) to conduct data mapping and quality assurance for the data integration for the new workforce data system in order to ensure the correct data are migrated from old data systems and newly collected data are relevant to the business needs of end users.</p>	<p>Build the new Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS) workforce data system and learning management system. The new system is expected to launch mid-2021.</p>
<p>1.1.4 ECE Workforce LINC Project. Use connected data from the Colorado Department of Human Services, the Colorado Department of Higher Education, and the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment through the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC) to gain a comprehensive picture of the early care and education workforce. Develop a model to provide timely information on workforce demographics, turnover, wages, and educational pathways and disseminate to relevant local and state stakeholders.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) partnered with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (CEAL) and the Governor’s Office to develop a stakeholder-informed agenda of high-priority analytic goals for new Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS) that models improved efficiency and can drive internal decision making.</p>	<p>Continue to refine the LINC project and incorporate Colorado Department of Higher Education and Colorado Department of Labor and Employment data to better understand pathways for the early care and education workforce. Complete analytic work from 2020 and produce a refreshed Colorado early care and education workforce snapshot report and an update to the data dashboard.</p>

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Ensure Coordinated Services		
STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<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.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) completed national, state and local outreach to identify best practices and opportunities for Colorado, informing the initial Coordinated Eligibility and Enrollment (CEE) toolkit outline. The OEC identified revisions to the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) application. The PDG Program Access Manager updated the Program Operations and Family Access matrices cross-walking federal and state requirements for mixed delivery system programs.</p>	<p>Finalize the CEE toolkit and pilot utilization through local community grants. Engage stakeholders to review and inform final changes to the CCCAP application. Partner with the Early Childhood Leadership Commission to form a workgroup in order to strengthen the state's role in developing and implementing coordinated eligibility and enrollment.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The “Aligning Early Childhood and Medicaid” multi-state learning group led by the Center for Health Care Strategies in partnership with the National Association of Medicaid Directors and ZERO TO THREE identified enhanced alignment across Medicaid and agencies responsible for early childhood programs, including programs eligible to bill Medicaid for services.</p>	<p>Engage a vendor to develop new (and update existing) Medicaid billing process guides for Child First, Healthy Steps, Nurse-Family Partnership, Early Intervention Colorado, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, and SafeCare Colorado. The vendor will provide training and technical assistance to state intermediaries to support utilization of the guides.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) convened a workgroup representing Early Childhood Councils (ECCs), the Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA), Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and the Family Resource Center Association (FRCA) to clarify the roles and responsibilities of FRCs, ECCs and the OEC. Based on the roles and responsibilities, the workgroup developed options for collaboration to promote whole child health and increase positive impacts on local communities. These options were captured in the <i>ECC and FRC Collaboration Guide</i>.</p>	<p>Pilot the <i>ECC and FRC Collaboration Guide</i> in local communities. The OEC will continue to convene workgroups to 1) solidify shared measures for ECCs; 2) engage in an organizational life-cycle analysis of ECCLA and FRCA; 3) formalize relationships among ECCLA, FRCA, their members, and the OEC; 4) identify training and resources to expand organizational capacity and to strengthen local partners; and 5) develop requirements and methodology for the triennial evaluation of ECCs.</p>

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Promote and Share Knowledge		
STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<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>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Preschool through Third Grade (P-3) Office continued their partnership with the National P-3 Center to develop a birth through five transitions roadmap with an emphasis on children’s transitions to kindergarten. The National P-3 Center laid the groundwork for the Transitions Roadmap by 1) conducting a federal and state policy synthesis examining references to transitions to kindergarten in sending and receiving system policy; 2) convening four groups of role-alike peers who work on kindergarten transitions with special populations across Colorado; 3) convening four community teams who participated in the February 2020 Building Bridges Transition Summit; and 4) developing an action plan for the transitions roadmap in Colorado.</p>	<p>The OEC and P-3 Office will continue to partner with the National P-3 Center to review the Action Plan for Transitions Roadmap in Colorado and initiate activities to 1) gain a breadth and depth of understanding about Colorado’s local context with a particular emphasis on school districts; 2) support state agencies and state-level nongovernmental partners’ efforts with local connections on the sending and receiving sides; 3) build a transitions toolkit of resources, training materials, and tools; disseminate and support implementation of the toolkit across the state; and 4) draft a transitions roadmap that articulates a statewide vision and plan for transitions to kindergarten.</p>
<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>		

Goal 2: INNOVATE SERVICE DELIVERY



OBJECTIVE 2.1: Promote Mental Health and Well-Being Through Early Identification and Consultation

STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<p>2.1.1 Trauma-informed Care Training. Offer Roots™, Branches and Seedlings trauma-informed training to Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation professionals, community support providers, early care and education providers, and families.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) launched the first cohort of the <i>Creating Trauma-Sensitive Early Care and Education Settings Leadership Fellows</i> pilot program. Fifteen Denver-metro directors participated in Branches to enhance their knowledge and application of trauma-informed care practices, developed peer networks and connected to local implementation partners and resources. The OEC hosted a Roots™ booster for the 2019 cohort to review lessons learned and new, responsive applications during the pandemic.</p>	<p>Initiate efforts to sustain training, including transitioning the three-day, in-person Roots™ training to a hybrid course. Develop the Branches-T modules, and invite Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation professionals to become certified trainers on the modular, trauma-informed care curriculum designed for the early care and education workforce. One Roots™ training will be held in July 2021, and one or two Branches-T and Seedlings Certification opportunities will be held in August 2021 for professionals who have completed the Roots™ curriculum.</p>
<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>Four local implementing agencies provided Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI) to 76 home-based child care providers serving 191 children. The pilot ended in December 2020.</p>	<p>Complete a case study of the pilot program and disseminate the results to home visiting stakeholders, policy makers, and the philanthropic community to encourage future investments in home visiting services for home-based child care providers.</p>
<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>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) engaged key stakeholders via workshops, focus groups and an online survey to develop and refine a Colorado model of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) service delivery that will responsively meets the needs of children, families and providers, while also being adopted by practitioners, administered to fidelity, and subject to evaluation. The <i>ECMHC Model Development Advisory Team</i> will support model development and implementation.</p>	<p>Launch implementation of the newly developed dosage guidelines. Partner with the Evidence-based Practices Implementation for Capacity (EPIC) Resources Center and the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (CEAL) to continue model development and to design an evaluation. Launch workgroups designed to elicit actionable recommendations for state government, higher education, and philanthropic organizations to bolster the ECMH workforce pipeline, recruitment and retention.</p>

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Promote Strong Relationships, Social and Emotional Development, Appropriate Nutrition and Physical Activity

STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<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>With the support of the Quality Nutrition Workgroup, data sharing was strengthened among the Colorado Departments of Human Services, Education, and Public Health & Environment in order to develop metrics and better analyze utilization of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) by early care and education programs. The cross agency collaboration identified opportunities to increase awareness of and engagement of CACFP.</p>	<p>Develop and disseminate tools to early care and education providers in order to support engagement in CACFP. Continue to analyze data to determine utilization, and incorporate GIS mapping. Continue to convene the Quality Nutrition Workgroup to review and align standards and monitoring procedures across CACFP, the National School Lunch Program, and the School Breakfast Program.</p>
<p>2.2.2 ECMHC Warm-line & 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>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) developed and distributed a telehealth readiness survey to Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) professionals. Implementation of the ECMHC warm-line was delayed due to COVID-19.</p>	<p>Augment the Early Intervention Colorado telehealth e-training to meet the needs of early care and education consultation professionals. Launch the warm-line and dispatch services, incorporating local lessons learned to optimize the warm-line.</p>

Goal 3: MAXIMIZE FAMILY KNOWLEDGE, ENGAGEMENT, AND SUPPORT



OBJECTIVE 3.1: Connect and Empower Families Using Culturally Responsive Practices

STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<p>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.</p>	<p>Drafted <i>The PLAYbook</i>, a school readiness guide for families and caregivers of children birth through five that showcases activities supporting healthy child development. <i>The PLAYbook</i> is aligned with the Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines to reflect the latest research and best practices.</p>	<p>Translate <i>The PLAYbook</i> into Spanish, and design materials for both print and digital use. Develop a statewide dissemination plan, including partnerships with local service providers to promote and distribute copies of <i>The PLAYbook</i> to families and caregivers. Identify other languages for translation.</p>
<p>3.1.2 Growing Readers Together. Expand Growing Readers Together to increase quality in informal care environments and support early literacy for children not in formal (licensed) early care and education programs.</p>	<p>The Growing Readers Together (GRT) Early Literacy Librarian Team provided professional development to more than 600 library staff through online training and webinars (which were subsequently viewed more than 3,000 times). The "Play, Learn & Grow" workshop material was converted to a video format for online distribution in 2021. GRT partnered with early literacy librarians statewide to create the Colorado Public Libraries Early Literacy Framework - the first framework of its kind in the state.</p>	<p>Disseminate the "Play, Learn & Grow" video to families and informal caregivers through the GRT website and local public libraries’ websites and social media channels. Resume in-person "Play, Learn & Grow" workshops when allowed. Partner with Rocky Mountain PBS to promote the video and participate in the Colorado Classroom Project supporting early literacy and young children's virtual learning. Implement Re-imagining School Readiness, an initiative designed to train library staff on evidence-based early childhood programming.</p>
<p>3.1.3 Early Literacy Grants. Expand the Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant Program to ensure the essential components of reading instruction are embedded into public preschool through third grade instruction including universal, targeted and intensive interventions. Increase focus on family knowledge and engagement.</p>	<p>The Colorado Department of Education Preschool through Third Grade (P-3) Office launched the Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant Preschool Expansion in Fall 2020. The first round of grants were awarded to 10 preschool programs in four communities, representing the Colorado Preschool Program, Head Start, community programs, and programs receiving special education funding. Training was delivered to more than 50 leaders, teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals, and coaches.</p>	<p>Review and refine the request for application and award additional grants. Continue to focus on community engagement to support sustainability.</p>
<p>3.1.4 Information Hub. Consolidate parent-facing websites into a single online resource that will connect parents to information about early care and education, developmental milestones, early screenings, and other programs and services to support young children and their families.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) reviewed the 2019 stakeholder report and market research report to formulate a competitive request for proposal to develop the state's new parent-facing website. The OEC executed the contract with the vendor in December 2020</p>	<p>Develop a summary of background research and best practices to inform the initial website goals and design. Engage stakeholders throughout the research, development and implementation phases. Launch the new website in Fall 2021, and initiate strategies to support statewide awareness and engagement.</p>
<p>3.1.6 Early Learning & Development Guidelines. Distribute the updated Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines print and online materials, including new videos on transitions and parents’ experiences, to parents, caregivers, early care and education providers, and early childhood professionals.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) coordinated with local community partners, including Early Childhood Councils and Family Resource Centers, to distribute more than 3,000 copies of the Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines (Guidelines) to families and caregivers. The OEC launched a digital marketing campaign to generate awareness of the Guidelines website as a resource that can support families during the pandemic and to drive parents and caregivers to the website to learn more, watch the videos, and download resources.</p>	<p>Work with local community partners to continue to print and distribute the Guidelines to families and caregivers. Renew the digital advertising campaign, and initiate the distribution of promotional items including fliers, stickers, and bookmarks. Engage with a communications vendor to understand gaps in awareness of the Guidelines and to help focus on more diverse audiences. Develop a Guidelines user guide.</p>

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Provide Opportunities For Education, Employment, Housing, Financial and Legal Support to Contribute to Family Economic Security

STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<p>3.2.1 ECLC Strategic Plan Leadership. The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) will identify a leadership role for specific strategies and ensure voices from families and providers representing diverse races, ethnicities, languages spoken, and geographic regions are included.</p>	<p>The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) conducted a landscape analysis of state, regional, and local activities aligned with the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan. Sixty-three organizations submitted 414 activities. The ECLC also formed the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Workgroup to update the strategic plan to reflect emerging needs and changes in Colorado's early childhood system. The workgroup recommended updates to 20 strategies and the addition of three new strategies to the plan.</p>	<p>Leverage the ECLC Program Quality & Alignment Subcommittee to identify gaps and opportunities to move the strategic plan forward. Reconvene the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Workgroup to continue to review and update the strategic plan. Identify opportunities to engage more parents and caregivers in the ECLC and its subcommittees.</p>

OBJECTIVE 3.3: Provide Inclusive Opportunities For Family Engagement and Leadership

STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<p>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.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) hired a Family Engagement Manager to strengthen family voice in decisions guiding the work of the OEC. The Family Engagement Manager completed a landscape analysis of state, regional, and local family advisory councils and engagement activities which informed the creation of a Family Engagement Leaders Network to strengthen statewide alignment and sharing of best practices. The OEC engaged with the Colorado Department of Human Services Family Voice Council and the Early Childhood Leadership Commission.</p>	<p>Develop a statewide family engagement framework designed to align existing frameworks, and provide a shared tool for all organizations to support more purposeful and meaningful engagement of families and caregivers to support young children's learning and development. Design and execute an Office of Early Childhood family advisory council to provide input to optimize the design and delivery of early childhood programs and services to ensure all children and families in Colorado are happy, healthy and thriving.</p>



Goal 4: INCREASE MEANINGFUL AND EQUITABLE ACCESS



OBJECTIVE 4.1: Build Community Capacity		
STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<p>4.1.2 Inclusion & Universal Design in ECE Settings. Increase the ability of early care and education professionals and programs to care for and educate all children by providing coaching, training, and materials focused on universal design and inclusion.</p>	<p>Partnered with the University of Colorado Denver Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering (CIDE) to pilot the Inclusion and Universal Design Project. Twenty-five licensed early care and education providers, serving 1,209 children, were accepted into the first cohort. CIDE provided a combination of small group learning, one on one coaching sessions, and an <i>Introduction to Universal Design</i> webinar. To support and implement their learning, each program received a kit of adapted materials featuring a wide variety of simple, low cost items for adapting toys, books, and learning environments to support all children, including those with delays and disabilities.</p>	<p>Evaluate the first cohort and launch the second cohort in April 2021. The second cohort will be expanded to 48 early care and education programs to better meet demand for the project. Develop the <i>Introduction to Universal Design</i> e-learnign course. Partner with public libraries and Early Childhood Councils to pilot local lending libraries of low-tech inclusive items.</p>
<p>4.1.3 CCCAP and QRIS Policy Research. Study local Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) and Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) policies for their impact on early care and education providers and families, including how new reimbursement rate policies have impacted family participation and access to high-quality early care and education programs, and implement indicated changes.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) partnered with the Butler Institute for Families to build on the 2019 analytic work. The 2020 project focused research activities on the extent to which intricate state and local Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) policies and procedures relate to program utilization by families and early care and education providers. Activities included a document review, county survey, stakeholder interviews, and an analysis of secondary data.</p>	<p>Finalize the report and present findings to county partners in March 2021. Work with county departments of human services and early care and education providers to identify policy changes, technical assistance opportunities, and training needs. Begin to study Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System policies and procedures.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Competitively procure a process management vendor to facilitate stakeholder engagement through workgroups, surveys, and other broad outreach activities. Develop a report of recommendations informing the design and implementation of Early Intervention Early Start.</p>

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Support Customer Affordability		
STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<p>4.2.1 Contracted Slots. Develop policies and processes to support county implementation of Colorado Child Care Assistance Program Contract for Slots to support an increase in local access to high-quality early care and education programs.</p>	<p>The Contract for Slots Policy Workgroup met to review the 2019 pilot program report and make recommendations to guide policy changes. Proposed rules were finalized by the workgroup and prepared for the rule rewrite process. The workgroup also identified recommendations for implementation, resulting in the creation of new templates for reporting and fiscal agreements.</p>	<p>Convene the System Build Workgroup to support requirements gathering to inform necessary changes to CHATS and the Attendance Tracking System. Deployment of system changes is expected in December 2021. Continue to develop training and technical resources to support implementation of contract for slots.</p>

Goal 5: STRENGTHEN BUSINESS PRACTICES



OBJECTIVE 5.1: Advance Sustainable Business Practices		
STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<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>Office of Early Childhood (OEC) staff completed the “Strengthening Business Practices for Child Care Programs” master trainer series during Summer 2020. Train-the-trainer events were placed on hold to leverage existing training opportunities and new partners to more effectively meet child care providers' needs during the pandemic. The OEC partnered with the Governor’s Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), and Early Childhood Councils (ECCs) to develop and launch statewide training and one-on-one consultation on child care business practices. The five trainings consisted of four to six sessions lasting two to four hours each session. The OEC and Early Connections Learning Centers provided a Child Care 101 training to increase SBDC staff knowledge of child care rules and regulations, and the financial resources available to licensed child care programs. About 70 early care and education (ECE) professionals participated in training, and initial surveys reveal a statistically significant change in knowledge for participants. Utilizing the state’s training alignment process, the OEC was able to award professional development hours to ECE professionals through the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System. The OEC began drafting the business practices toolkit, which will include information on integrated financing for ECE programs.</p>	<p>Continue partnership among OEC, OEDIT, SBDCs, and ECCs to offer 11 trainings beginning in March. Training will feature three tracks: child care centers, family child care homes, and child care start up/expansion. Several trainings will be offered in Spanish, and at least one training will be provided on-demand. SBDCs will also continue to offer free one-on-one consultation. The business practices toolkit will be available in late Summer 2021.</p>
<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>5.1.4 New & Expanding ECE Micro-grants. Provide early care and education micro-grants to support start-up costs, targeting providers in child care deserts and those serving infants, toddlers, or children with special health or developmental needs.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) launched the Start-up and Expansion Micro-grant Program in partnership with Early Childhood Councils. New and expanding licensed early care and education programs used grant funding for licensing fees, training and professional development, early learning materials, technology investments, child care health consultation, coaching, administrative supports, and personal protective equipment. Grants were capped at \$3,000 for family child care homes and \$6,000 for child care centers. Seventy-eight grants were awarded to support 14 new child care centers, 16 new family child care homes, and the expansion of 48 existing child care facilities, expanding statewide capacity by approximately 900 slots.</p>	<p>Partner with the Denver Early Childhood Council to enhance ecConnect to support administration of micro-grants. The Colorado State Legislature approved \$10 million in State General Fund for the OEC to implement the Emerging and Expanding Child Care Grant program. The grant program will utilize the infrastructure developed under the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to administer grants of \$3,000-\$50,000 through June 2022. The state-funded grants will include capital costs, which were excluded under the PDG micro-grant program. Due to the state investment, Start-up and Expansion Micro-grant Program will be put on hold with the expectation of resuming grants in 2022 or after state funds are exhausted.</p>

Goal 6: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS AND THE WORKFORCE



OBJECTIVE 6.1: Implement Quality Standards

STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<p>6.1.1 Colorado Shines Updates. Continue to retool the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for the 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>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) engaged SRI to synthesize the 2019 Colorado Shines QRIS Framework Revision Workgroup recommendations and add a national perspective to the work. The draft Framework was shared back with key stakeholders and 2019 workgroup members for feedback. The OEC continued to partner with Clayton Early Learning to support the move from the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) to ERS-3 initiated in 2019. 500 individuals have completed training. Through a new virtual certification process, 200 coaches are certified in ITERS-3 and ECERS-3, and 48 coaches are certified in FCCERS-3.</p>	<p>Finalize updates to the Colorado Shines QRIS Framework. Engage a vendor to develop and implement a change management strategy to create awareness of the changes and support early care and education providers engaged in the rating process. The new QRIS Framework is expected to be fully implemented in October 2021. Continue to provide training on the ERS-3 tools and to certify coaches in the new tools. Full adoption of the ERS-3 tools is expected in Fall 2021 or after public health requirements allow for on-site observation in early care and education classrooms.</p>
<p>6.1.2 Consultative Roles Alignment. Review key consultative roles, including Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care Specialist Network, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants, Colorado Shines QRIS Coaches, and Child Care Health Consultants, to ensure coordination and collaboration between roles. Identify qualifications and ongoing professional development supports to ensure individuals are equipped to support quality practices within licensed early care and education programs.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) convened workgroup to improve coordination and collaboration amongst five roles: Child and Adult Care Food Program Specialists, Child Care Health Consultants, Colorado Shines QRIS Coaches, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants, and EQ Infant Toddler Specialist Network. The workgroup informed the Consultative Roles Guidebook, which includes opportunities for self-reflection for professionals to consider how they impact the early care and education workforce and intersect with one another.</p>	<p>Review workgroup suggestions to determine the next steps to further cultivate partnerships amongst roles that will enhance, strengthen, and support healthy relationships between caregivers and children. Identify ways to increase early care and education providers' and families' awareness of the value and availability of consultative supports. Plan a consultative roles conference.</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>Four Early Childhood Councils that implement Expanding Quality (EQ) Initiative infant/toddler professional development (ECCs) completed a privately-funded pilot of the LENA Grow Sequences.</p>	<p>Partner with the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council to implement LENA Grow Sequences. Continue to learn lessons about scaling implementation of enhanced coaching models for infant and toddler early care and education professionals. Explore updates to the FIND model to determine available opportunities for implementation in 2022.</p>
<p>6.1.4 FIND Coaching. Build relationships and infrastructure to pilot Filming Interactions to Nurture Development (FIND) Coaching, and explore opportunities to expand FIND through public-private partnerships.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) intended to expand this effort in 2020, but was unable to do so due to the pandemic.</p>	<p>Partner with the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council to implement LENA Grow Sequences. Continue to learn lessons about scaling implementation of enhanced coaching models for infant and toddler early care and education professionals. Explore updates to the FIND model to determine available opportunities for implementation in 2022.</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>In partnership with Early Intervention Colorado and Preschool Special Education, the Office of Early Childhood developed two eLearning courses for the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System: Introduction to the Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Programs and Supporting Young Children through Inclusive Care.</p>	<p>Promote new eLearning courses. Work with Child Care Licensing and Administration to consider the addition of a training requirement to licensing rule. Partner with the Department of Education Preschool through Third Grade Office and the Positive Early Learning Experiences Center to develop a state-level vision of high quality inclusion for young children in early care and education settings and formulate an action plan.</p>

OBJECTIVE 6.2: Develop And Retain The Workforce		
STRATEGY	2020 MILESTONES	2021 ACTIVITIES
<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. Add 24 eLearning course hours based on identified needs.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Instructional Design Unit developed and launched thirteen self-paced online courses for the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS) including <i>Standard Precautions (Spanish)</i> and six courses in English and Spanish to support the ERS-3. All older PDIS courses were updated to be compliant with new web standards (HTML5). The OEC completed a training analysis to inform new training for prospective family child care providers ("pre-licensing" training).</p>	<p>Continue to develop self-paced online courses including but not limited to the Safe Sleep course refresh, Protective Factors, and Emergency Preparedness. Pilot and implement the "pre-licensing" training for family child care providers. Build the new Colorado Shines PDIS workforce data system and learning management system for an expected launch in mid-2021. The new PDIS will be accessible in both English and Spanish.</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>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) partnered with Red Rocks Community College and Mesa County Public Health to implement the CDA scholarship program. Scholarships were awarded to 395 new CDA candidates and 18 renewal candidates, supporting training costs, assessment fees, and providing CDA navigation support. CDA scholarships supported training in center-based infant/toddler, center-based preschool, and family child care.</p>	<p>Offer 220 scholarship to new candidates and 70 scholarships to renewal candidates. The application will open in three waves in February, May and August. Map Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS) courses and training alignment process courses to the CDA standards, allowing candidates to obtain credit for training completed on the PDIS. Explore CDA credential articulation into college credit.</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>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) hired a Coaching Manager to lead the statewide pilot and developed a workplan in partnership with Early Childhood Councils (ECCs) to guide the pilot program. The OEC engaged a vendor to initiate revisions to the EQIT curriculum, updated all Foundations, and identified gaps and mis-alignments across modules.</p>	<p>Hire four Coaching Specialists. Host monthly coaching community of practice meetings and monthly competencies workgroup meetings. Update coaching competencies based on workgroup recommendations. Research digital coaching platforms to support virtual coaching. Launch a monthly coaching newsletter to increase communication and connections across coaches. Clarify the larger goals and framework for the EQIT curriculum and the EQ RELATE coaching model.</p>
<p>6.2.5 ECE Competencies. Enhance the training alignment process to increase the number of trainings aligned with Colorado Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) incorporated feedback from the 2019 Competencies Workgroup, aligned the Competencies with NAEYC's Power to the Profession, and identified changes to increase language and cultural competency.</p>	<p>Finalize changes to the Competencies and embed them within the new Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS). The updated PDIS will include a self-assessment tool to support early care and professionals' understanding of their mastery of Competencies as well as training available to them to build Competencies.</p>

The Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan goals and objectives are aligned with the Early Childhood Colorado Framework. This alignment is indicated by the following Framework system icons:



State and Local
Systems



Environment



Relationships

This project is supported by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0054, from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Child Care, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Update to the Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Preschool

CDE has developed guidance for districts that wish to use federal COVID relief funding to serve a preschool that is part of an elementary school. Guidance for allowable uses can be found here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/caresact/crf-allowableexpenditures>.

These allowable uses are outlined in more detail at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/caresact/esser1> and at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/caresact/esser2>

School Readiness

CDE is working to summarize guidance, provide technical, and professional development on planning for summer programming and the next school year in alignment with our goal of school readiness: preparing ready schools. This ties in with the broader work of the department. The emphasis is on providing guidance, supporting connected relationships and implementation, and removing barriers to support districts in preparing for summer and fall to effectively and intentionally support all students' well-being, social-emotional learning, and learning.

Additionally, CDE is developing guidance for K - 1 enrollment, continuing to support the Preschool Development Grant and the Transition roadmap work, and working on forming a cross-agency and cross-department team to support revisions to the Head Start MOU template reflective of the internal and external feedback we have received this month.

Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant

CDE is excited to introduce a new grant opportunity for school districts to support literacy initiatives across the State for birth-12th grade. The Colorado Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant is a federally supported grant intended to expand the use of evidence-based reading practices and interventions that advance literacy skills for children from birth to grade 12. Emphasis will be on historically underserved students including children in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities through educator professional development, literacy coaching support, development of a district-wide Comprehensive Local Literacy Plan and other high impact strategies. The CLSD Grant will support ONE cohort of districts for 4 years beginning October 1, 2021. There will be a total of \$15,401,552 available funds over the grant period.

The request for applications for the CLSD Grant will be released the week of May 10th, and the application deadline is July 30, 2021. An informational webinar on the CLSD Grant Program and application process will be announced soon. For questions, please contact the CLSD Grant Program Manager, Stacey Smith at smith_s@cde.state.co.us.

Colorado Department of Higher Education Update April 2021

CDHE is happy to share the following updates:

- Partial funding to restore Educator Loan Forgiveness has been approved. Senators Zenzinger and Rankin & Representatives McLachlan and McCluskie are making some changes to the eligibility requirements.
- SB21-232 the CO Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) Displaced Workers Grant is making its way through the legislature. The bill appropriates \$15M to COSI available to all public institutions of higher education to provide scholarships and wraparound support to individuals that lost employment or had a significant reduction in hours due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant will allow them to finish their degree or reskill and upskill.
- The Department is also keeping an eye on SB21-236 and is particularly excited about Section 3 which creates an “Employer-based child care facility grant program” that would award funds to construct, remodel, renovate, or retrofit a child care center on site. We are hoping that IHEs will take advantage of this program where they can support community early care needs and create a space for ECE candidate’s field experiences.
- May 6th CDHE will celebrate the end of Teacher Appreciation Week by honoring candidates at the Department’s 5th annual Future Educator Honor Roll. Educator preparation candidates and guests will attend a virtual celebration to hear speakers to include the Colorado Teacher of the Year. Afterward, the candidates will be awarded a certificate by CDHE Executive Director, Dr. Angie Paccione.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Update April 2021

Farm to Early Care and Education

The Colorado Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Coalition, which has two CDPHE staff as co-leads, is implementing a rigorous work plan with five strategies. Two are described in this update: a roadmap and mini-grants.

Roadmap: Contractors, CDR Associates (Collaborative Decision Resources) with Cultivando, are interviewing key state and local organizations and agencies' staffs, food producers, food distributors, master gardeners, ECE providers, early childhood council members and others to inform the development of an actionable Farm to ECE three-year roadmap and strategic plan with vision including racial and social equity focus; detailed steps and tools needed to achieve the plan; and specific roles for partners and stakeholders. The roadmap is to be completed by November and will be used for future programming.

Mini-grants: The Coalition identified eight communities to receive an up to \$4,000 grant from a pool of 78 applications. The experiences and knowledge gained through the mini-grant projects will inform the work of the Coalition and help ensure the state's strategies for Farm to ECE reflect the actual experiences and needs of individuals working in the ECE settings when working with local food systems and gardening partners. The eight awardees were selected out of a group of 20 applications which met the majority of the criteria for the grants.

WIC

Modernizing the WIC experience for families: COWIC received funds through a competitive national WIC Special Project Innovation grant to modernize technology and make participation in the program easier for families. This will enable caregivers to upload documents, review and sign certification policies, request appointments, find information easier on our website, and more.

WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program: Colorado received funding to administer the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) this year! This will provide additional benefits to nearly 10,000 Coloradans participating in WIC to purchase locally-grown produce at community farmers' markets during the upcoming growing season. WIC is partnering with Nourish Colorado and the Colorado Farmers Market Association to implement this exciting program in farmers' markets soon to be determined across the state.

More Fruits and Vegetables for families participating in WIC: A provision included in the most recent COVID-19 relief bill allows states to **temporarily** increase the CVB (cash value benefit) for fruits and vegetables in WIC food packages for women and children up to \$35 per person per month. While the increase is only for four months (June through September), we are excited to provide this additional benefit to COWIC families during these trying times. We are in the process of developing our implementation plan and are awaiting further guidance from the USDA.

Environmental Health

We are seeing a significant number of GI illness outbreaks at child care facilities in the Denver Metro area. The suspected agent is norovirus. A letter was sent to providers in the following counties: El Paso, Douglas, Arapahoe, Adams, Denver, Jefferson, Broomfield, Boulder, Larimer, and Weld. CDPHE is investigating non-COVID outbreaks in child care in most counties.

There is a new Public Health Order (PHO) [20-38](#) that replaces the dial PHO 20-36. There are few important items to note in this order.

1. It specifically states that masks are still required in school and child care settings, with some allowable exceptions.
2. It also specifically states that schools and child care shall follow the Case and Outbreak Guidelines for Schools and Child Care.

Child care facilities and schools should continue to follow the guidelines on the CDPHE and CDE websites. COVID guidelines have been updated for [resident camps](#), [day camps](#), and [cleaning](#).

Oral Health Unit

As shared in February, the CDPHE Oral Health Unit collaborated with WIC to create new training on oral health for WIC staff. The training videos for WIC staff are now available online, and accessible for viewing here on the [Oral Health Unit Youtube](#) channel.

The Cavity Free at Three program at the Oral Health Unit (OHU) at CDPHE trains medical providers to provide preventive oral health services in the well child check. Bouncing back from pandemic, 2021 is on track to train a record number of multi-clinic pediatric practices across the state including Western Pediatrics, Kids First Health Care, and Greenwood Pediatrics and Fort Collins Youth Clinic which serve thousands of pediatric patients every year. To learn more about Cavity Free at Three or request training - <http://www.cavityfreeatthree.org/>

Health Care Policy and Finance Update, April 2021

Health First Colorado and CHP+ member enrollment during the federal government's public health emergency declaration is being "frozen" so people don't lose coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this, the churn between Health First Colorado and CHP+ coverage we usually saw before the pandemic is different now. CHP+ members may be moved to Health First Colorado coverage, but Health First Colorado members do not get moved to CHP+ coverage during the public health emergency. This change in policy during the public health emergency is a factor in our most recent enrollment information for children:

- Health First Colorado enrollment for the children eligibility groups increased from 475,329 members in March 2020, to 552,090 members in March 2021. That's an increase of 76,761 members, or 16%.
- CHP+ enrollment for children decreased from 75,508 members in March 2020 to 61,548 members in March 2021. That's a reduction of 13,960 members, or 18%



Public Comment Now Open: Child Care and Development Fund State Plan 2022-2024

The DRAFT Pre-Print Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Colorado is available for public review and comment. The public comment period will close on June 1, 2021. This Plan describes the Child Care and Development Fund program to be administered by Colorado from October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2024. The Colorado Department of Human Services is the Lead Agency in this effort.

View the plan by visiting www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com and selecting "Resources" then "Public Notice Information" or by clicking [here](#).

A public hearing will be held May 12, 2021 as a webinar from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. [Please register for the CCDF State Plan webinar here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information on how to join the webinar.

[CLICK HERE to VIEW the DRAFT PLAN](#)

[CLICK HERE To COMMENT on the DRAFT PLAN](#)

[CLICK HERE to REGISTER for the PUBLIC HEARING](#)



What is the Child Care and Development Fund?

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program provides resources to state, territory, and tribal grantees that enable low-income parents to work or pursue education and training so that they can better support their families while at the same time promoting the learning and development of their children. The CCDF program also provides funding to enhance the quality of child care for all children.

The federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is an aggregate of several funding sources that is distributed in block grants by the federal government to the states and territories. The majority of the funds are to be used to provide child care services to families who meet certain eligibility criteria. A portion of the funding is to be used for activities to improve the quality of child care. Another portion is to be used to pay for costs of administering the CCDF.

The purpose of the CCDF is to increase the availability, affordability, and quality of child care services. States and territories receiving CCDF funds must prepare and submit to the federal government a plan detailing how these funds will be allocated and expended.

What is in the CCDF Plan?

The CCDF Plan is how states and territories apply for CCDF funding and is the primary mechanism that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) uses to determine state and territory compliance with the requirements of the law and rule. The CCDF Plan allows states and territories to describe their implementation of the CCDF program and it is organized into the following sections:

1. Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems and Funding Sources
2. Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education
3. Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families
4. Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Children
5. Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings
6. Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce
7. Support Continuous Quality Improvement
8. Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

These organizational categories reflect key goals of an integrated system of child care for low-income working families.

The content provided in the draft CCDF State Plan consists of program policy and regulations implemented through the rule promulgation process as well as strategies to increase the availability, affordability, and quality of child care services and to ensure the health and safety of children. Program policy and rules were created in partnership with many stakeholders and we are committed to continuing and strengthening our engagement in those processes to help create the best early child care system for Coloradans.

Thank you for joining! We will begin shortly.

ECLC

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

April 22, 2021

9:30am - 12:30pm

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 ●



Welcome, Introductions & Approve Minutes



Meeting Objectives

- Approve the February 25, 2021 and April 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- Discuss Universal Preschool Planning Next Steps
- Identify opportunities for continued partnership with Colorado Early Childhood Councils
- Provide feedback on the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan
- Listen to Early Childhood Leadership Commission Subcommittees updates
- Hear comments from the Early Childhood Community



Legislative and Budget Updates

Bill Jaeger, Colorado Children's Campaign





Universal Preschool Planning/ New State Agency Recommendation - Updates and Next Steps

Pamela Harris



- [Universal Preschool Policy Discussion Guide](#)
- [ECLC Recommendation on Governance](#)
- [Letter to Early Childhood Community](#)



Early Childhood Council Panel -
Learning from Communities in Colorado
Tom Massey

Welcome!

- Maegan Lokteff, Executive Director, **Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance**
- Early Childhood Council Leaders
 - Lucinda Burns, **Early Childhood Options**
 - Lisa Jansen Thompson, **Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County**
 - Sherri Valdez, **Early Childhood Council of the San Luis Valley**
 - Pamela Walker, **ECHO & Family Center**



Break



Public Comment

Tom Massey

Public Comment

- Each speaker may take up to five (5) 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.



Child Care and Development Fund State Plan

Stacey Kennedy, Todd Jorgensen, Carin Rosa
Tamara Schmidt

Colorado Child Care Development Fund State Plan



COLORADO

Department of Human Services 13

State Plan Timeline 2021

Conduct 60 day Public Review and Comment, close on June 1, 2021.

April - June

View the plan at
ColoradoOfficeOfEarlyChildhood.com

June

Submit State Plan to Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

October 1

Plan is in effect for 3 years
(October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2024)



Child Care Development Fund State Plan Overview

**Family
Engagement**

**Stable Child Care
Financial
Assistance**

**Equal Access to
Child Care**

**Standards and
Monitoring to Ensure
Health and Safety**

**Qualified and
Effective Child
Care Workforce**

**Continuous Quality
Improvement**

Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan

As each community has varying disaster impacts, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) State Disaster Plan's purpose is to provide a framework for response, while being flexible and responsive to each community's unique needs. However, the COVID-19 pandemic affected every child care facility in the state. Based on the unprecedented need, OEC updated it's disaster preparedness response plan and implemented the following COVID-19 practices:

- **Convened a large stakeholder group** to allow for all aspects of emergency child care to be addressed and resolved to ensure child care operations continued throughout the pandemic.
- **The stakeholder group** included representatives from agencies and organizations identified in the Disaster Plan.
- **OEC coordinated with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)** to make sure that any open facilities were compliant with public health orders. This provision is key to ensure all public health orders issued by CDPHE were followed and that the guidance is understood for the safety of both the children and child care providers.

OEC implemented the following technology resources:

- **Developed an online COVID-19 resources page** to help providers update their practices during the pandemic. The resource page includes a resource guide for programs, frequently asked questions, and links to additional resources and information to assist them in operating their program throughout the pandemic
- **Developed and deployed an online provider status portal on Colorado Shines** that allows providers to directly inform the Department of their current operational status. Providers can update availability of slots by age group, notify the Department of areas where they are in need of additional resources (staffing, supplies, PPE, ect.), request information on current programs, grants or other resources available to child care providers.

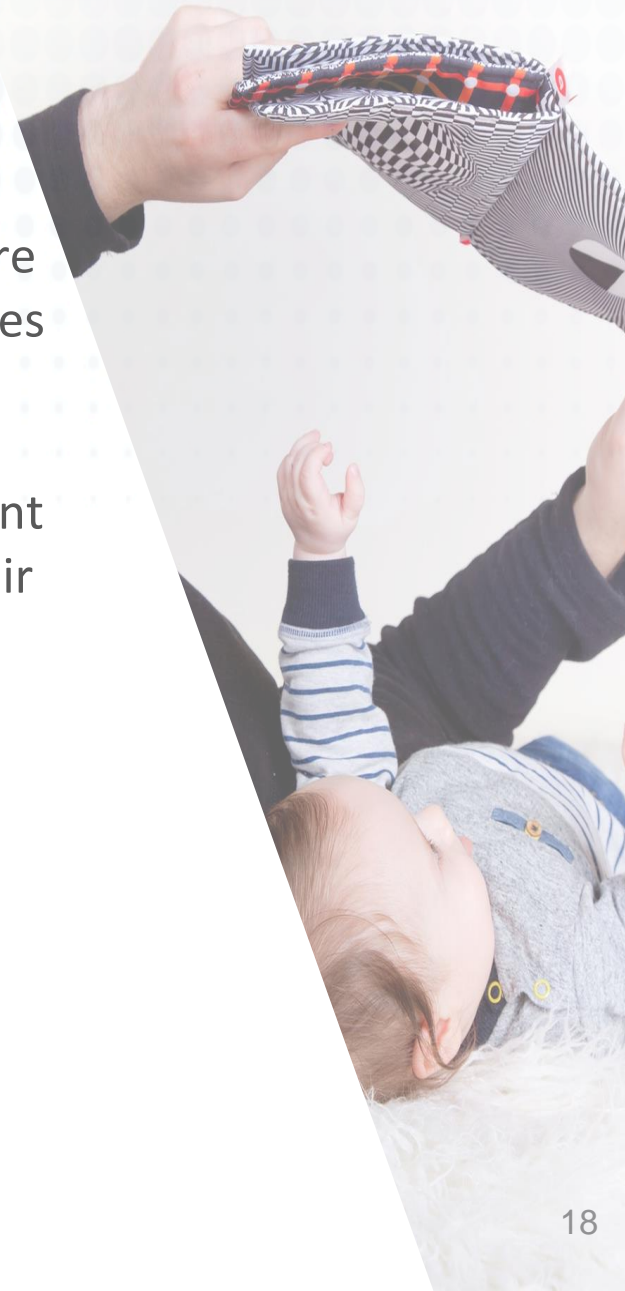
A photograph of a woman with her hair in a ponytail, wearing a red shirt, holding a young girl. The girl is wearing glasses and a pink and white striped sweater. They are outdoors with trees and a blue sky in the background. A semi-transparent white box with a thin border is overlaid on the image, containing the text.

Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education

Overview of Family Engagement

CDHS is required to support the role of parents as child care consumers who need information to make informed choices regarding the services that best suit their needs.

A key purpose of the CCDBG Act is to “promote involvement by parents and family members in the development of their children in child care settings” (658A(b)).





Outreach and Consumer Education Strategies

- **Deliver Information Through:**
 - Colorado Child Care Assistance Program
 - Child care consumer education website
 - ColoraodShines.com
 - ColoradoOfficeofEarlyChildhood.com
 - Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)
- **Target audience**
 - Parents receiving child care subsidy
 - General public
 - Child care providers
- **Parental Complaint Process**

A close-up photograph of two children wearing face masks. The child on the left is a girl with light hair and blue eyes, wearing a purple mask and a blue fuzzy jacket over a pink and white striped shirt. The child on the right is a boy with dark hair, wearing a green patterned mask and an orange and black striped shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing a white fence and a paved area. The entire image has a light blue tint.

Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families

Overview of Providing Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families

Four main focus areas:

- Eligibility for children and families
- Family contribution to payment
- Increasing access for vulnerable children and families
- Continuity for working families

In providing child care assistance to families, Lead Agencies are required to implement and describe the following policies and procedures:

- A minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination period
- A process to account for irregular fluctuations in earnings
- A policy ensuring that families' work schedules are not disrupted by program requirements
- Policies to provide for a job search of no fewer than 3 months if the Lead Agency exercises the option to discontinue assistance
- Policies for the graduated phase-out of assistance
- Procedures for the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness and, if applicable, children in foster care

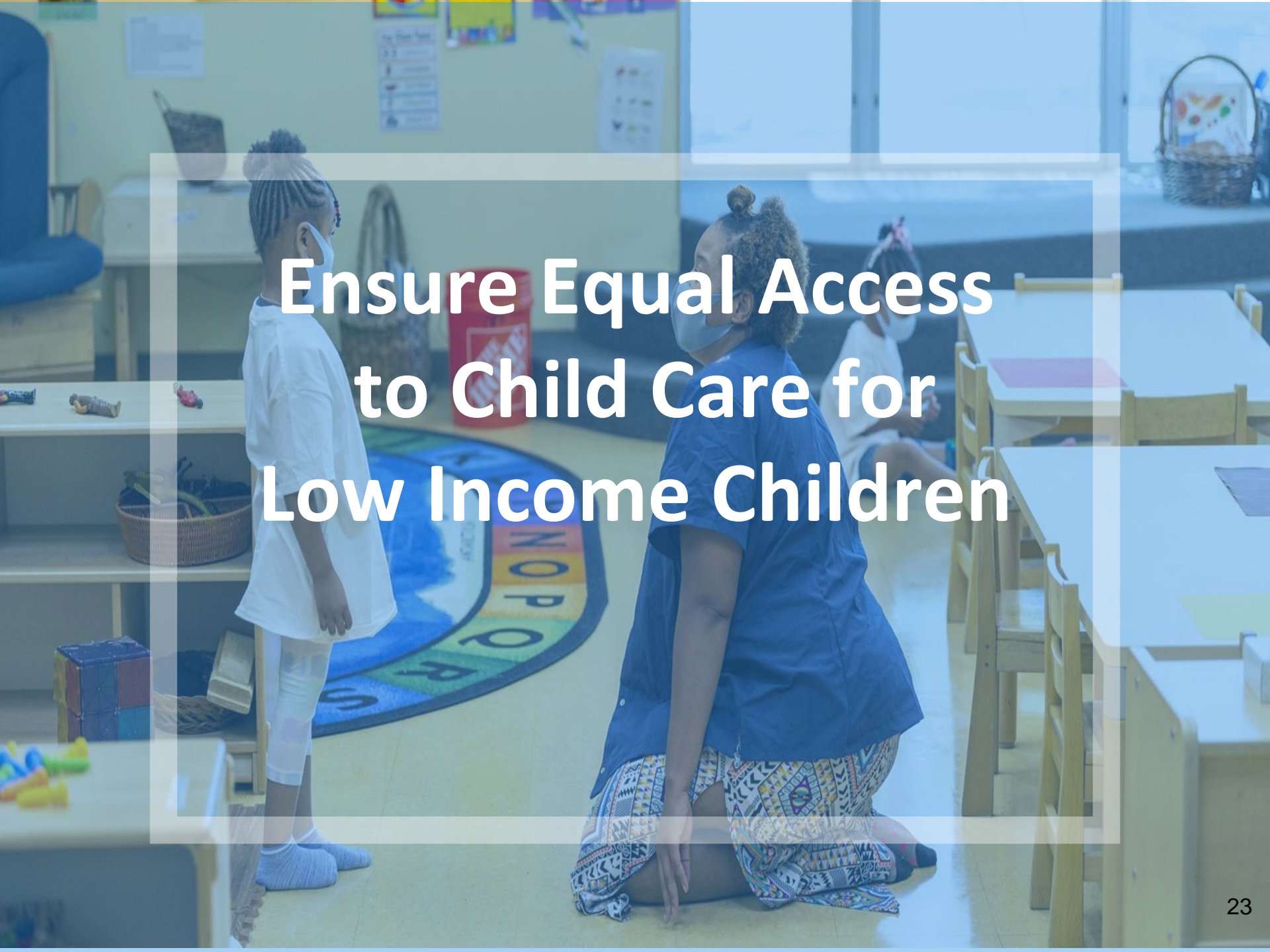
In this section Lead Agencies also identify and describe:

- How they define eligible children and families
- How they increase access for vulnerable children and families
- Policies that protect working families
- Family's contribution to the child care payment (parent fee/co-payment)



Summary of Changes

- **Eligibility for Children and Families** - additional information added about eligibility criteria for Colorado Works Child Care and Protective Services Child Care to reflect state CCCAP rules.
- **Family Contribution to Payment** - updated the copayment chart to reflect state CCCAP rule effective July 1, 2021.
- **Continuity for Working Families** - additional information added regarding 12-month eligibility for Colorado Works Child Care to reflect CCCAP rule effective October 1, 2020.

A photograph of a woman in a blue shirt and patterned skirt kneeling on the floor of a classroom, facing a young girl in a white dress. Both are wearing face masks. The room contains wooden tables, chairs, and educational materials. A large, semi-circular rug with letters is on the floor. The text "Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low Income Children" is overlaid in white on a semi-transparent blue background.

Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low Income Children

Overview of Equal Access

Five main focus areas:

- Maximize parental choice and implement supply building mechanisms
- Assess market rates and analyze the cost of child care
- Establish adequate payment rates
- Implement generally accepted payment practices and ensure timeliness of payments
- Establish affordable copayments

A core purpose of CCDF is to promote parental choice and to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care services that best suit their family's needs. Parents have the option to choose from center-based care, family child care, or care provided in the child's own home.

In supporting parental choice, the Lead Agency must:

- Ensure that families have the opportunity to choose from the full range of eligible child care settings
- Provide families with equal access to child care that is comparable to that of a non-subsidy family
- Employ strategies to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care services



Summary of Changes

- **Assess Market Rates and Analyze the Cost of Child Care** - due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lead Agencies may request a waiver for up to one additional year (until July 1, 2022) to complete the required MRS or an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. Lead Agencies may also request the required Narrow Cost Analysis be waived for one year (until July 1, 2022).
- **Establish Adequate Payment Rates** - increase in daily reimbursement rates by 5% for all provider rates, plus additional targeted stimulus-related increases to infant, toddler and preschool rates that are designed to cover a portion of the disparity between the current CCCAP rate and the cost of quality child care for that rate type and county demographic. The increase will be fully funded with federal stimulus funds to the Child Care and Development Fund grant.
- **Implement Generally Accepted Payment Practices** - increase in the minimum number of monthly absences paid to providers to come into compliance with providing full payment if a child attends at least 85% of authorized care. Three per month for Tier 1-2 providers and four per month for Tier 3-5 providers.
- **Establish Affordable Co-Payments** - added information regarding the new co-payment structure effective July 1, 2021.

A healthcare worker wearing a white lab coat, glasses, and a white surgical mask is holding a young child. The child is wearing a green shirt and patterned shorts. The worker is holding a clear plastic bottle with a white cap. The background is a clinical setting with a window and some equipment. The entire image has a blue tint and a white text box overlay.

**Establish Standards and
Monitoring Processes to
Ensure the Health and Safety
of Child Care Settings**

Overview of Health and Safety Standards

CDHS is required to have child care licensing requirements.

These health and safety requirements must be appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served, must include specific topics and training on those topics, and are subject to monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that providers are complying with the health and safety requirements.





Health and Safety Strategies

- Health and safety standards (ratios, group sizes, and qualifications)
- Training requirements (pre-service and orientation and ongoing)
- Annual inspections
- Expanded background checks

Criminal Background Check NSOR & Interstate

- NCIC National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR)

5 year Previous State of Residency

- Inter-state state criminal registry
- Inter-state sex offender registry
- Inter-state abuse and neglect registry



**Recruit and Retain a
Qualified and Effective Child
Care Workforce**



Overview of Workforce

This section provides an overview of the Colorado framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education for the child care workforce (98.44(a)); provides a description of strategies used to strengthen the business practices of child care providers (98.16(z)); and addresses early learning and developmental guidelines.

Workforce Strategies

- **Frameworks:**
 - Colorado Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Professionals
 - Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System
 - Licensing requirements
- **Training and Professional Development**
 - Offered through the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS) and face-to-face
 - Business Practices
 - Early Learning and Development Guidelines



Summary of Changes

- **Colorado Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Professionals Refresh**
- **Colorado Shines PDIS Rebuild**
 - Expands registry functionality to 19 different credential/qualifications
 - Creates efficiencies for Child Care Licensing Specialists
 - Launches June 2021
- **Expanded recruitment and retention strategies**
 - Allowing any Coloradan to take the minimum coursework required to be a licensed educator (ECE 101 and 103) through the community college system for free
 - Increasing funding for proven recruitment and retention programs, including scholarships to pay for ongoing higher education tuition, apprenticeships for work-based learning, loan forgiveness
 - Offering wrap-around peer mentorship to retain educators and streamlining pathways into the early childhood workforce
- **Expanded training offerings**
 - LEADING EDGE™
 - Awarding bonuses to reward increased professional development
 - Providing free online training to enhance Director competencies
- **Enhanced analytic strategies**

A man and a young boy, both wearing blue shirts, are looking at a bulletin board. The man is pointing towards the board, and the boy is also pointing. The bulletin board is covered with various photos and documents. The scene is set outdoors, possibly at a community event or a school. The overall tone is positive and collaborative.

Support Continuous Quality Improvement



Quality Improvement Strategies

- **Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System is used as a primary measure**
 - Licensing is embedded as Level 1
 - Quality improvement incentives are awarded to support program level coaching, professional development and early learning materials
- **Expanding Quality for Infants and Toddlers (EQIT) 48-hour training**
 - Includes professional level coaching

Summary of Changes

- **Refreshed Colorado Shines QRIS framework**
- **Expanded quality improvement grant opportunities**
 - Expanding and Emerging Child Care Grant Program
 - Competitive Community Innovation Grants
- **All Early Childhood Councils will serve as CCR&R agencies**

A young child with dark curly hair, wearing a green shirt, is sitting at a table and eating. The table has a white plate with a fork and some yellow food, and a red cup. Another child in a blue plaid shirt is in the foreground, seen from the back. The background is a blurred classroom or daycare setting with posters on the wall, one of which says 'Clayton'.

Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability



Overview of Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

Internal Controls and Accountability Measures to Help Ensure Program Integrity

Program integrity and accountability activities are integral to the effective administration of the CCDF program. Lead Agencies are required to describe in their Plan effective internal controls that ensure integrity and accountability while maintaining the continuity of services. These accountability measures should address reducing fraud, waste, and abuse, including program violations and administrative errors.

This section includes topics on internal controls to ensure integrity and accountability and processes in place to investigate and recover fraudulent payments and to impose sanctions on clients or providers in response to fraud.

Summary of Changes

There were two new focus areas added to this section of the State Plan:

- Strengthening internal controls to mitigate risks and reduce improper payments which includes CHATS monitoring reports and the implementation of county-level reviews including standardized procedures and training.
- Establishing processes to evaluate internal control activities for effectiveness which includes streamlining county monitoring activities, standardizing case reviews, and analyzing error trends for technical assistance.



A young child with dark hair, wearing a black and white striped shirt, is smiling and looking up at an adult. The adult, also wearing a black and white striped shirt, is holding the child's hands. The scene is set in a room with a carpeted floor. In the background, there is a yellow cart and a white piece of furniture. In the foreground, there is a white card with a colorful illustration of a person running. The text "Thank you!" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Thank you!

Contact Us

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Governor's Office Updates

Scott Groginsky



ECLC Subcommittee Updates

Susan Steele

ECLC Subcommittee Updates

- Program Quality and Alignment Subcommittee
 - [Subcommittee Norms and Guiding Questions](#)
- Data Subcommittee
 - [2021 Areas of Opportunity Indicators Report – Next Steps](#)
- Communication Subcommittee
 - [2021 Communications Plan](#)
- Early Childhood Workforce Development



Co-Chairs' Next Steps, Final Thoughts and Adjourn

ECLC

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Next Meeting:

June 24, 2021

9:30 am- 12:30 pm

