

Welcome and thank you for joining!



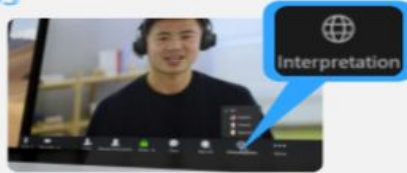
Early Childhood Leadership Commission

- This meeting will be recorded and posted on the ECLC Transition Webpage
- Please use the chat to ask questions for the presenters
- Spanish language interpretation is available. Follow the instructions to join the appropriate language channel

**Durante este evento, se dispondrá de interpretación de idiomas.
Para escuchar la interpretación en un idioma:**

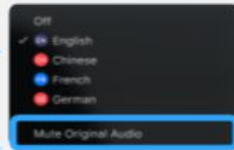


1. En los controles de la reunión o el seminario web, haga clic en **Interpretation (Interpretación)**



2. Haga clic en el idioma que desee escuchar

3. (Opcional) Para escuchar solo el idioma interpretado, haga clic en **Mute Original Audio (Silenciar audio original)**



1. En los controles de la reunión, toque el icono de los puntos suspensivos **⋮**
2. Toque **Language Interpretation (Interpretación de un idioma)**
3. Toque el idioma que usted desea escuchar



4. (Opcional) Toque el interruptor **Mute Original Audio (Silenciar audio original)**



5. Haga clic en **Done (Done)**



Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Early Childhood Transition Plan
Monthly Town Hall
December 2021

Introductions

Members of the Transition Working Group (TWG):

- Katy Anthes - Commissioner, Colorado Department of Education
- Michelle Barnes - Executive Director, Colorado Department of Human Services
- Pamela Harris - President & CEO, Mile High Early Learning
- Tom Massey - Deputy Executive Director, Health Care Policy & Financing
- Susan Steele - President & CEO, Buell Foundation
- Carrie Cortiglio - Deputy Director, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
- Ben Henderson - Director of Operations and Cabinet Affairs, Governor's Office

Voices from the Field

Diana Schaack

Assistant Professor, School of Education & Human
Development, University of Colorado Denver

Overview



Overview

[HB21-1304](#) created a new Department of Early Childhood (DEC) to coordinate a unified early childhood system and ensure the equitable distribution of resources and programming, including the new voluntary, universal preschool program.

As the state moves forward in designing the new program, it will continue to seek significant engagement from families, providers, school districts, advocates, community leaders, and other stakeholders. This input will be key to ensuring success for young children and families across the state.

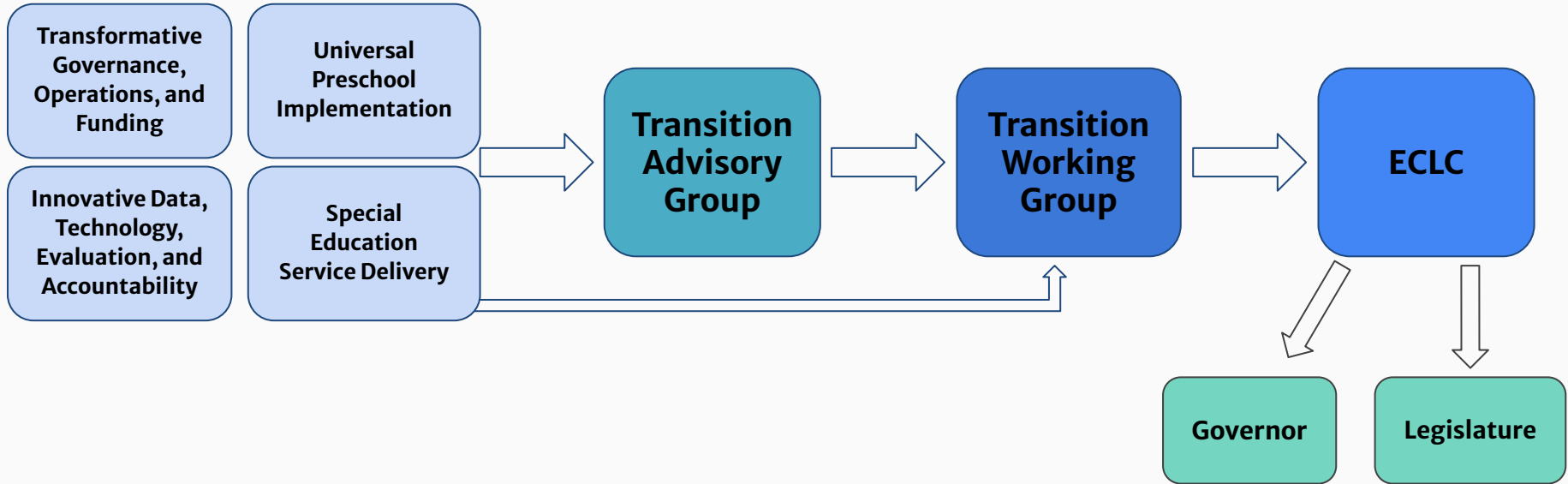
The monthly Town Hall is designed to provide stakeholders with the most up-to-date information and opportunities to get involved.

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) is tasked with submitting reports to the Governor and the Legislature outlining detailed plans to transition to the new department and to implement the voluntary, universal preschool program. The Department of Early Childhood [Transition Plan](#) was submitted and unanimously approved in November 2021, and the recommendations for voluntary, universal preschool are due January 2022.

Stakeholders will be key to informing the path forward, and the ECLC has developed a transition planning process in accordance with [HB21-1304](#) that prioritizes public engagement and input.

Planning Process



Department of Early Childhood - Transition Plan

The Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan was approved by the ECLC on Nov.10, 2021, and submitted to the Governor and the Legislature.

Department of Early Childhood
[Transition Plan](#)

The Executive Summary is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [Arabic](#).



Guiding Principles



DRAFT Universal Preschool Recommendations



Recommendation 1: Building and Strengthening Early Childhood Infrastructure

To achieve the goal of a universally available preschool program that helps to prepare all children for school and beyond, Colorado should address its infrastructure needs, including leadership, capacity, workforce, resources, and more.

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

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

Recommendation 1a: Local Leads

Local leads should be the Department of Early Childhood's (DEC) partners in each area of the state to help organize the local early childhood landscape and serve as the singular local level point of contact on early childhood in their community.

- Local leads should bring community partners together to build a unified, long-term early childhood community plan and to request state-administered early childhood dollars in alignment with that plan.
- Local leads should be selected through a rigorous application process conducted by DEC, and applications should demonstrate buy-in from other local partners.
 - DEC should select the best fit entity to fulfill these duties and hold such entities accountable to fulfill the charge.
 - Any public agency (e.g., a county) or Colorado based nonpublic organization (e.g., an ECC) could apply.

Recommendation 1a: Local Leads (Continued)

With the appropriate support of the Department of Early Childhood, local leads should be charged at minimum to:

- Coordinate the universal preschool application process
- Ensure universal access to the preschool program
- Manage mixed delivery
- Allocate funding equitably
- Ensure understanding of quality
- Increase community capacity
- Support local workforce

Recommendation 1b: Department of Early Childhood's Role

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

- **As part of overseeing local leads, DEC should provide contracts, partnerships, training, technical assistance, and resources to local leads, promote collaboration and collective learning, and elevate examples of success from Colorado and nationally.**
- **If a community is unable to identify an appropriate local lead, DEC should fulfill these responsibilities itself or through another partner.**

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

Recommendation 1b: Department of Early Childhood's Role (Continued)

DEC should leverage existing and build early childhood infrastructure to successfully deliver universal preschool by:

- Empowering local leadership
- Building capacity, immediately and over time
- Incentivizing local share
- Funding equitably
- Aligning regulations and programs

Recommendation 1b: Department of Early Childhood's Role (Continued)

DEC should establish a unified state-level vision and align all funding, initiatives, and efforts toward achieving it by:

- Unifying applications
- Defining quality
- Defining competencies for the workforce
- Working toward a liveable wage for the early childhood workforce
- Promoting inclusive classrooms
- Setting mixed delivery guidelines
- Collaborating with the Colorado Department of Education to support students with special education needs.

Recommendation 2: Universal Preschool Application

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

This application should:

- Be designed with the user experience in mind and offer families a simple and engaging interface.
- Collect only as much information from families as necessary for universal preschool enrollment.
 - Families who need additional funding should also be able to fill out information to determine eligibility for other services.
 - There should be easily integratable and interoperable technology that verifies eligibility for additional funding by checking against other programs families may already be eligible for or utilizing
- This application should ensure that families are able to go to one place to apply for all early childhood services for their children.

Recommendation 3: Eligibility and Prioritization

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

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

These additional adjustments can include:

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

Recommendation 3: Eligibility and Prioritization (Continued)

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

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

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

Recommendation 4: Quality and Evaluation

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

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

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

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

Recommendation 5: Workforce

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

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

Recommendation 5: Workforce (Continued)

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

Recommendation 6: Special Education

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

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

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

Recommendation 6: Special Education (Continued)

To best support children with special needs, DEC should:

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

Upcoming Engagement Opportunities



Draft Recommendations Feedback

The Transition Working Group (TWG) is hosting a series of listening sessions to gather feedback on the draft universal preschool recommendations. Register on the ECLC Transition [website](#).

- Saturday, Dec. 11: 10 a.m.
- Monday, Dec. 13: 10 a.m.
- Monday, Dec. 13: 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Dec. 14: 11:30 a.m.

Feedback can also be submitted via this online [form](#) through Dec.15.

Upcoming Subgroup Meetings

The Special Education Subgroup and Universal Preschool Subgroup will be meeting for the last time this week. Register on ECLC Transition Subgroups webpage:

www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org/subgroups

- Special Education: Dec. 8 , 2 p.m.-4 p.m.
- Universal Preschool: Dec. 9, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Upcoming TAG Meeting

The Transition Advisory Group (TAG) will be meeting for the last time on Dec. 15 from 3-5:30 p.m.

Meeting materials and the link to join can be found on the ECLC TAG webpage:

www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org/transition-advisory-group

General Feedback Form

A brief feedback form is available on the ECLC website and will remain throughout the process. Stakeholder input is made public, as directed by the legislation, and shared with the Transition Advisory Group (TAG) and its subgroups.

[Access the feedback form here.](#)

[View feedback received, to date, here.](#)

Next Steps



Next Steps

By Jan. 1, 2022, TWG must submit the completed universal preschool recommendations to the ECLC.

By Jan. 15, the universal preschool recommendations, as approved by the ECLC, must be submitted to the Governor; the Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services Committee and the Education Committee of the House of Representatives; and the Health and Human Services Committee and the Education Committee of the Senate.

Stay Informed

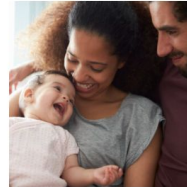


Transition Website

The ECLC has a dedicated [page](#) on its website with information about the transition process.

The page includes up-to-date news and information, with meeting agendas, background materials, meeting recordings, a [calendar of events](#), and a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

SIGN UP FOR THE NEWSLETTER!



MONTHLY TOWN HALLS

Starting on August 10, the ECLC will hold monthly town halls to provide updates on the transition planning progress, highlight the work ahead, and share opportunities to get involved.



SUBGROUPS

The Transition Advisory Group Subgroups will meet regularly to advise and inform the Department of Early Childhood transition plan and universal preschool program recommendations.



FEEDBACK FORM

The ECLC values your suggestions, recommendations, questions and innovative ideas to inform the Department of Early Childhood transition plan and universal preschool recommendations.

Monthly Newsletter

The ECLC has a monthly newsletter that provides stakeholders with updated information about the transition process.

You can [subscribe to the newsletter](#) through the ECLC website.

The December newsletter will be issued tomorrow.

Department of Early Childhood Transition and Universal Preschool Recommendations Planning Process

Building on its longstanding commitment to serving children and families, Colorado is creating a new unified state Department of Early Childhood, effective July 1, 2022.

The ECLC is tasked with approving a plan to transition to the new agency and guiding the state's new universal preschool program. To ensure recommendations are representative of the unique and diverse voices across Colorado, the ECLC will engage a wide range of stakeholders including parents, families, members of the early childhood workforce, providers, school districts, human services leaders, and others.

View this [brief summary](#) of the transition planning process and explore the webpages linked here for more information. We also invite you to [watch the kick-off](#) of the transition planning process (including a message from Governor Jared Polis!). The ECLC values your suggestions, input and questions! Please use our [Feedback Form](#) to share your innovative ideas! **All responses are made public** and shared with the Transition Advisory Group, Subgroups and the ECLC.

Sign up for the Newsletter to receive transition planning updates and meeting information!

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Questions?



Thank you!

For information on all of the opportunities to engage in this work,
please visit www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org/transition