

# Welcome and thank you for joining!



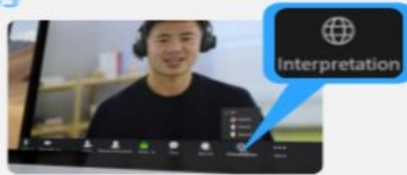
Early Childhood Leadership Commission

- 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:**

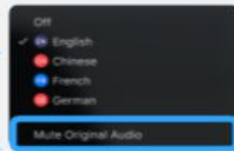


1. En los controles de la reunión o el seminario web, haga clic en **Interpretation (Interpretación)**



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**  
**January 2022**

Welcome!

Governor Jared Polis

# Introductions

Representatives from the Transition Working Group (TWG):

- Mary Alice Cohen - Director, Office of Early Childhood, Colorado Department of Human Services
- Melissa Colzman - Associate Commissioner for Student Learning, Colorado Department of Education
- Sondra Ranum - Director of ECE Workforce Policy, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Pamela Harris - President & CEO, Mile High Early Learning & ECLC Co-Chair
- Susan Steele - President & CEO, Buell Foundation & ECLC Co-Chair
- Tom Massey - Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing & ECLC Co-Chair

# 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.

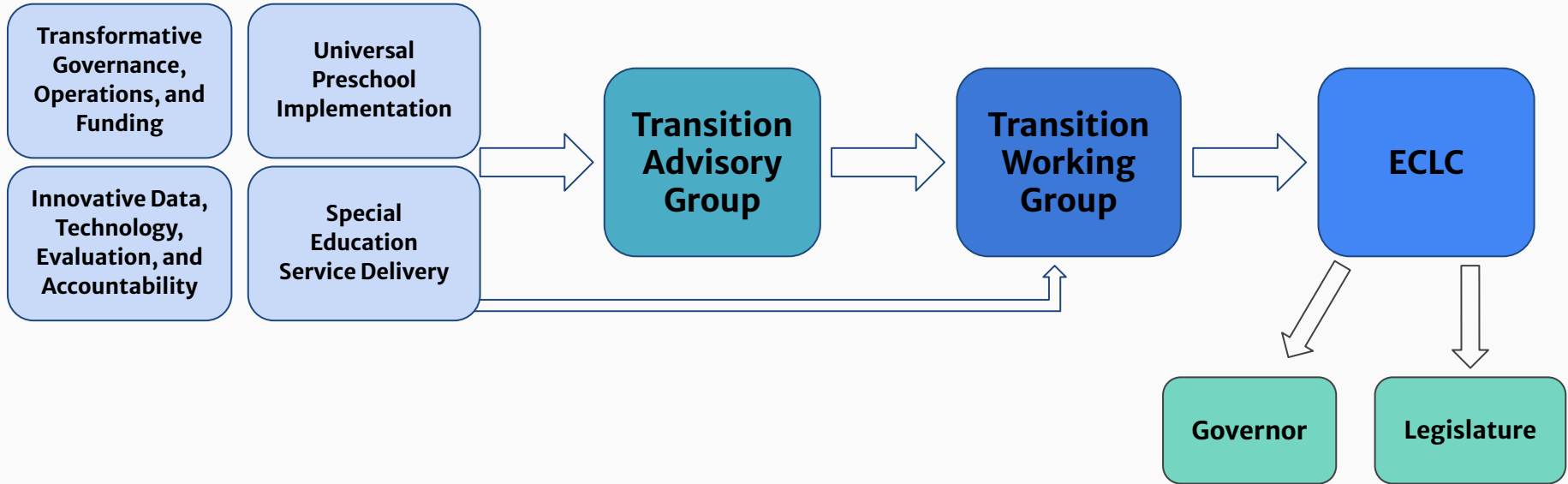
The monthly Town Hall is designed to provide stakeholders with the most up-to-date information and opportunities to get involved.

# 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 the voluntary, universal preschool program must be approved by January 15, 2022.

Stakeholders were key to informing this work, and the ECLC developed a transition planning process in accordance with [HB21-1304](#) that prioritized 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.

Access the Department of Early Childhood [Transition Plan](#).

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



# Guiding Principles



# 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 **plan for the allocation of** 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, **to help build their capacity to execute their charge including fiscal capacity**, 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 DEC's 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), Colorado based nonprofit organization (e.g., an ECC), or newly created organization could apply.

## 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 **until a local partner is identified**.

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

## Recommendation 2: Simple and Unified Family Application

DEC should work to develop a single, unified application for families to access **all publicly-funded early childhood services and slots from birth to 5+** 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.
  - Families who would only like to access universal preschool should be able to complete a base application with the minimum amount of needed information collected.
  - 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.
  - As the application is developed and implemented, DEC should ensure it adheres to all state and federal data privacy and security laws.
- DEC should develop an implementation plan with all necessary partners to ensure, at a minimum, this application is functional for universal preschool by 2023.
- This application should allow for local customization, so communities can include any additional local or regional based programming in the application.

## Recommendation 3: Eligibility and Prioritization

DEC should work with stakeholders **with diverse and representative perspectives** and **content area experts, including experts in early childhood finance**, 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 slots.
- Any other additional incentives such as teacher qualifications, implementation of mixed delivery, care for infants and toddlers, options for wrap-around services, and quality.



## Recommendation 3: Eligibility and Prioritization (Continued)

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

- At a minimum, CPP funding does not drop below current levels as it is combined with Proposition EE to create one universal preschool funding stream, including keeping current funding for children 3 years old and younger experiencing risk factors, so these children can consistently access services.
- 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.
- The process to make these determinations is data driven and transparent.

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, **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**, **DPP**, 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 **developmentally appropriate** standards for the quality experience children should be having in classrooms regardless of funding source **or setting**, and align resources and supports to help local communities achieve it;
- Consider a phased approach to quality to support all communities as they seek to scale quality, due to the current constraints of the system;
- Create free and widely accessible (**e.g., multi-lingual**) 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, **including special education service delivery providers**, available to work on day one of universal preschool implementation and they are appropriately compensated **with a liveable wage**, while also ensuring continued access for all ages before preschool and addressing shortages across the age continuum.
  - **This will include managing any unintended consequences impacting the workforce serving infants and toddlers.**
- Review the current workforce qualification pathways to create a simplified 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 **professional learning**, and review regulatory barriers to promote attainment of these competencies through identified partners, including higher education pathways.
- Develop and share **sustainable** evidence-based strategies in conjunction with leads from CDHE, CDE, **CDLE**, **ECLC**, 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).
  - **Consider mentoring or coaching opportunities to promote development of the workforce.**
  - **Connect members of the workforce to early childhood career navigators as a resource.**
  - Increase access to professional development to attain these competencies through freely available training, reduced bureaucracy, increased options for work-based learning, and stackable, credit-bearing experiences that align with degree pathways.
  - **Provide targeted support for members of the workforce who have faced historic and systemic barriers to ensure Colorado's early childhood workforce is linguistically, racially, and culturally diverse.**

## 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 **as a supplement to** 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 **in a mixed delivery system**.



## Recommendation 6: Special Education (Continued)

To best support children with special needs, DEC, **in coordination with CDE**, should:

- Establish clear expectations for supporting children with special needs, consulting with stakeholders with requisite representation and expertise.
- As soon as possible DEC should create an interagency agreement(s) with CDE to:
  - Define the roles and responsibilities of the two departments, local education agencies, and all types of preschool providers, **recognizing that CDE will be the identified agency responsible for compliance with IDEA, Part B**;
  - Ensure data collection and sharing such that all critical data can be disaggregated, **while adhering to requirements for protecting personally identifiable information**;
  - Support programs and communities to provide inclusive, individualized, meaningful, culturally relevant, linguistically relevant, active and participatory learning for all children;
    - Determine how community-based programs **and school-based programs** will be held accountable for providing access and supports in implementing a mixed-delivery preschool program.
    - **The interagency agreement should also address what training in working with children with disabilities will be useful for community-based and school-based preschool providers.**
  - Ensure the new preschool program's requirements are integrated with the existing requirements LEAs have for the provision of special education services;
  - Ensure compliance with all federal regulations;
  - Eliminate or reduce duplicative regulations; and
  - Ensure regulations are addressing all legislative requirements for universal preschool.

# Next Steps



# What happens next?

The completed [Universal Preschool Recommendations](#) were shared with the Early Childhood Leadership Commission on Dec. 30.

The ECLC will meet on Jan. 11 at 9:30am to review and vote on the completed Universal Preschool Recommendations. Meeting details, including a link to attend virtually, can be found on the [ECLC website](#).

By Jan. 15, the Universal Preschool Recommendations, as approved by the ECLC, must be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly.



# Welcome M. Michael Cooke - Transition Director

- Leading the transition to the new Department of Early Childhood
- State Director for the Council for a Strong America
- Douglas County Board of County Commissioners
- Cabinet Member for former Governor Bill Owens
- Executive Director of DORA and later DOR
- Executive Vice President of a Charter School serving at-risk students

# Upcoming Engagement Opportunities

Stakeholder engagement will remain critical to the success of the DEC and the universal preschool program. Stakeholders can expect to remain informed and engaged through the following new and existing channels:

- Website
- [Feedback Form](#)
- Newsletter Updates through the [Our Voice Newsletter](#)
  - The final Transition Newsletter will be distributed tomorrow. Please sign up for *Our Voice* to continue to receive updates!
- Topic-specific focus groups
- Monthly Town Hall events

Additional details, such as a calendar of events, will soon be provided.

Questions?



Thank you!

