



Thursday, September 8, 2016
9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Health Care Policy and Financing
303 East 17th Avenue, 11th Floor Conference, Denver 80203

Meeting Objectives:

- Approve the meeting minutes from August 18, 2016
 - Provide updates on the next steps of the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* website project
 - Discuss approval of the Early Childhood Communication Collaborative Report
 - Learn from the early childhood community during retreat preparation and public comment
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- 8:45-9:00am** Arrive and Snacks
- 9:00-9:15am** Welcome and Business Meeting
- Approval of minutes from August 18, 2016
 - Retreat Reminder – October 7, 2016
 - Next meeting – November 10, 2016 at Clayton Early Learning + Race to the Top Recognition Breakfast
- 9:15-9:45am** Department Updates
- Human Services (Julie Krow)
 - Office of Early Childhood Updates (Mary Anne Snyder)
 - Early Childhood Council Rules
 - Child Maltreatment Strategic Agenda (Kendra Dunn)
 - Education (Melissa Colman)
 - Health Care Policy and Financing (Tom Massey)
 - Public Health and Environment (Karen Trierweiler)
- 9:45-10:50am** ECLC Subcommittee Updates
- Data Committee (Charlotte Brantley and Susan Steele)
 - Early Childhood Communication Collaborative (Elsa Holguin and Tom Massey)
 - Report Presentation and Discussion
 - Program Quality and Alignment Subcommittee (Letty Bass, Melissa Colman, and Anna Jo Haynes)
 - *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* Update
 - Professional Development: Transforming the Workforce Update
- 10:50-11:00am** Public Comment

- 11:00-11:55am** Retreat Preparation
- Workforce Development and Compensation (Nancie Linville)
 - Health and Behavioral Health (Jordana Ash)
 - Support for Informal Care (Diana Romero Campbell)
 - Policy Champions (Bill Jaeger)
 - Funding Sustainability for Early Childhood (Bruce Hoyt)

11:55-12:00pm Co-Chairs' Final Thoughts and Adjourn

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

ECLC Meetings:

The next **ECLC Meeting** will be held on **November 10, 2016** from **9-12am** at **Clayton Early Learning, Main Auditorium; 3801 Martin Luther King Blvd; Denver, CO 80205.**

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



Minutes
Thursday, August 18, 2016
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Health Care Policy and Financing
303 East 17th Avenue, 11th Floor Conference, Denver 80203

Meeting Objectives:

- Approve the meeting minutes from May 12, 2016
- Welcome new ECLC Commissioners
- Discuss retreat preparation and stakeholder feedback for ECLC Strategic Plan
- Hear from the early childhood community during public comment
- Provide updates from the five state departments and Office of Early Childhood
- Hear updates from ECLC Subcommittees and Working Groups

Attendees: Melissa Colman, Heather Craiglow, Anna Jo Haynes, Elsa Holguin, Jeff Kuhr, Katie Mason, Tom Massey, Jeanne McQueeney, Kristina Mueller, David Padrino, Lydia Prado, Cindy Schulz (by phone), Mary Anne Snyder, Susan Steele, Karen Trierweiler and George Welsh (by phone)

Welcome and Business Meeting

Anna Jo Haynes called the meeting to order at 10:08 am. She welcomed the six new commissioners to the ECLC. Jeff Kuhr, Lt. Gov. Donna Lynne, Jeanne McQueeney, Lydia Prado, Cindy Schulz, and George Welsh were selected to fill the vacancies. Lt. Gov. Donna Lynne will act as the public co-chair of the ECLC.

- **Retreat Preparation - October 7, 2016**

The ECLC is holding a retreat for commissioners on October 7, 2016. ECLC staff has prepared a request for proposal for a facilitator for the retreat. At the completion of the retreat, a three year strategic plan will be created.

- **Strategic Plan - Stakeholder Feedback Process**

In the development of the strategic plan, the ECLC is seeking stakeholder feedback. ECLC staff has created a stakeholder survey to solicit topics and areas of focus for the ECLC, as well as strengths and areas of improvement. An email with a link to the survey will be distributed to the ECLC Stakeholder list and posted to the ECLC Website. Results from the Stakeholder Survey will be used to determine the top topics and priorities suggested. Those topics and priorities will be addressed during the September 8, 2016 ECLC Meeting.

Department Updates

- **Human Services**

- **Office of Early Childhood Updates (Mary Anne Snyder)**

Mary Anne Snyder reported on the US Department of Education visit from Secretary King. The event was a celebration of Colorado's accomplishments over the last three years. She explained that the OEC is participating in round two of the Head Start Partnership Grants. The Early Intervention Team and Jordana Ash are training providers to identify developmental and social emotional delays. Director Reggie Bicha has the budget requests for the Governor's budget. Colorado was one of nine states to receive an ACF Impact Project award for technical assistance;

the focus of this work will be the development of a qualified substitute pool for centers and home providers. The OEC is hosting a series of stakeholder meetings on the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP), the first of which is happening later in the day.

- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Centralized Call Center

Kelly Wilson and Karen Enboden (OEC) gave a presentation on the CCR&R centralized call center. They shared that there has been a tremendous increase in the volume of calls, and that Mile High United Way is hiring additional staff to manage the increase. Staff are solely dedicated to answering calls, are bilingual, and are collecting data around the types of calls and issues being addressed. Some callers have expressed receiving long call back times or wait times, but this should be addressed through additional staff. There are also options to live-chat or email with questions.

Anna Jo Haynes, Barb Grogan and Kristina Mueller met with all the State Department Directors. As a way to increase cross-agency collaboration, department designees will provide department updates at each ECLC Meeting. Updates will include information about efforts in each department related to early childhood.

- Education (Melissa Colman)

Melissa Colman explained that Katy Anthes was selected as the interim Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Commissioner. Acting Commissioner Anthes will continue in that role until after the legislative session. CDE was honored by the Secretary King visit for Race to the Top (RTT). CDE is accepting applications for the Ready School Grant, funded through RTT. The grant will support districts and schools to enhance and improve kindergarten programming. She also discussed the development of the Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan. As described at the last ECLC Meeting, CDE is using a spoke and hub process. Currently, the spoke committees are being seated. These spokes communicate with the hub, which will work with the State Board of Education. Information will be provided on the CDE Website. The plan must be implemented by the 2017-18 school year. Early childhood stakeholders have expressed concerns over the lack of an early childhood spoke. Melissa Colman explained that because early childhood is not a specific section in the state plan, it was not included as a spoke committee. She encouraged stakeholders to participate in or attend spoke meetings. Commissioners requested that Kristina Mueller coordinate to get ECLC and/or early childhood stakeholder representation to all of the related spoke committee meetings.

- Health Care Policy and Financing

Tom Massey explained that HCPF had a soft launch of Medicaid rebranding. "Health First Colorado, Colorado's Medicaid Program" is the new name. Health First Colorado insures 1.4 million Coloradans, 45,000 of which are children, and 59,000 are enrolled in CHP.

- Public Health and Environment

Karen Trierweiler discussed the increase in developmental screenings for children. These are being connected to the referral and treatment continuum. She also gave a short presentation on Early Childhood Obesity rates and the positive effects of breastfeeding on obesity and other risk factors. Please see handout.

- Approval of minutes from May 12, 2016

A quorum was met, and Anna Jo Haynes called a motion to approve the minutes. Tom Massey moved to approve the May 12, 2016 minutes as distributed.

Public Comment

Evie Hudak, Hudak Consulting, encouraged commissioners and early childhood stakeholders to participate in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) planning. She provided a fact sheet about early childhood in ESSA. Please see fact sheet for more information.

ECLC Subcommittee Updates

- Program Quality and Alignment Subcommittee
 - Framework Phase II
Kristina Mueller explained that the Phase II project had been approved by the Commission in concept. Commissioners discussed the need for a Data Subcommittee representative on the working group and the reasons why users would want to participate in this platform. She requested two motions to continue the work of this phase. Charlotte called a motion to approve the listed representatives and Heather Craiglow as the working group. All approved. The motion passed. She also called a motion to allow the Executive Committee to interview a web development vendor and move forward with the vendor contingent upon funding. All approved, and the motion passed.
- Early Childhood Communication Collaborative (ECCC) (Elsa Holguin and Tom Massey)
 - Updated Scope of Work and Deliverables
Elsa Holguin and Tom Massey provided an update on the ECCC updated scope of work and deliverables. They explained that the work will culminate in a report that will be presented to the Commission at the September 8th meeting. The report will contain findings from the work as well as a list of recommendations to better engage with parents and caregivers. Once the report is complete, the Commission will determine how to move forward with implementation of the recommendations.
- Data Committee (Charlotte Brantley and Susan Steele)
Susan Steele updated the ECLC that the Subcommittee Co-chairs are having a clarity meeting next week with OEC Staff. The meeting will address the ways that the Data Subcommittee can be most impactful in its work. The Data Subcommittee will address how the ECLC will use data and to champion its use throughout Colorado.

Co-Chairs' Final Thoughts and Adjourn (Anna Jo Haynes)

Elsa Holguin asked to invite Bill Jaeger to the Sept. 8 ECLC Meeting to talk about minimum wage ballot initiative and its early childhood impact.

Anna Jo Haynes shared that she recently spoke with Representative Brittany Pettersen, who is chairing the Early Childhood and School Readiness Legislative Commission (ECSRLC). Rep. Pettersen is interested in hearing from stakeholders on suggestions for early childhood topics for the ECSRLC's meetings.

Anna Jo Haynes adjourned the meeting at 11:56 am.

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ECLC Meetings:

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COLORADO
Office of Early Childhood
Department of Human Services

Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action



Early Childhood Colorado Framework


Strategies for Action

- Connect and Empower Families
- Build Community Capacity
- Implement Quality Standards
- Make Data Informed Decisions
- Develop and Retain the Workforce
- Support Consumer Affordability
- Advance Sustainable Business Practices
- Encourage Public Private Approaches
- Pursue Continuous Quality Improvement
- Ensure Coordinated Services
- Promote and Share Knowledge

Fundamentals

- Strong Partnerships
- Sufficient Investments
- Sound Policy
- Robust Public Engagement
- Shared Accountability
- Effective Leadership
- Relevant Education Opportunities

Outcomes ► access, quality and equity

 Family Support & Education
  Health & Well-Being
  Learning & Development

ACCESS

- Family engagement and leadership opportunities exist within programs, schools and communities
- Services and supports promote the well-being and resiliency of parents and caregivers
- Family friendly policies and practices exist in the workplace
- Comprehensive health coverage and services are consistently utilized by pregnant women and children
- Integrated and preventive maternal and child physical, behavioral and oral health services are available
- All settings promote mental health and well-being through early identification, consultation and treatment
- Education, coaching and ongoing training exist for caregivers, teachers and other professionals
- Learning experiences and environments are high quality, developmentally appropriate and affordable

QUALITY

- Family knowledge and capacity support children's healthy development and learning
- Families advocate for high quality comprehensive services and supports that lead to future success
- All health care providers, including mental health, deliver coordinated, family focused care
- Settings and practices promote strong relationships, social and emotional development, appropriate nutrition and physical activity
- Formal and informal care environments and education practices reach the highest levels of quality
- Adults understand and support children's learning and development, including social and emotional
- All settings provide effective transitions across and within programs, schools and systems

EQUITY

- Education, employment, housing, financial and legal supports contribute to family economic security
- Families, including those with high needs, experience timely and coordinated services and supports
- Families have the ability to plan the number and timing of their children
- All environments are safe, free of toxins, have affordable foods and offer physical activity
- Children with special health, behavioral or developmental needs receive individualized services and supports
- All children are ready for school and achieving by 3rd grade regardless of ability, race, place, income, language and culture
- Children, including those with high needs, receive timely, comprehensive and affordable academic services and transition supports

all children are valued, healthy and thriving



Results

-  **CHILD**
 Young children reach their developmental potential and are ready to succeed in school and in life
-  **ENVIRONMENTS**
 Environments that impact children are safe, stable and supportive
-  **RELATIONSHIPS**
 Adults are knowledgeable, responsive and interact effectively with and on behalf of children
-  **COLORADO**
 Localities and the state attain economic and social benefits by prioritizing children and families

Work to Date

- Interviews with leadership at the Colorado Office of Early Childhood and other key state stakeholders to identify key concerns.
- Survey of professionals of current prevention landscape.
- Review prior/current related planning efforts and their impacts.
- Conduct a web-based parent survey and focus groups with key parent subgroups.
- Compile a literature review of promising prevention efforts.
- Clarify core outcomes, related indicators and priority interventions.
- Create an approach to guide community planning teams and develop a toolkit of resources.

Planning Components

1. Identify foundational elements- agree on elements you want reflected in *all* of your interventions and policies.
2. Establish a core set of outcomes and related indicators - agree on a common way to assess progress at the *individual and population levels*.
3. Identify high priority strategies - assist communities in selecting their most promising “best bets” .
4. Develop tools to support community planning -

Overarching outcomes

Child Well-Being & Achievement

Caregiver Well-Being & Achievement

Consistent High Quality Caregiving

Safe Supportive Neighborhoods

Individualized Services

Organization & Practice Change

Collaboration & Community Capacity

Policy Reform

Foundational Principles

Program Monitoring and Integrity

Build Workforce Capacity

Continuous Quality Improvement

Fostering Data Integration

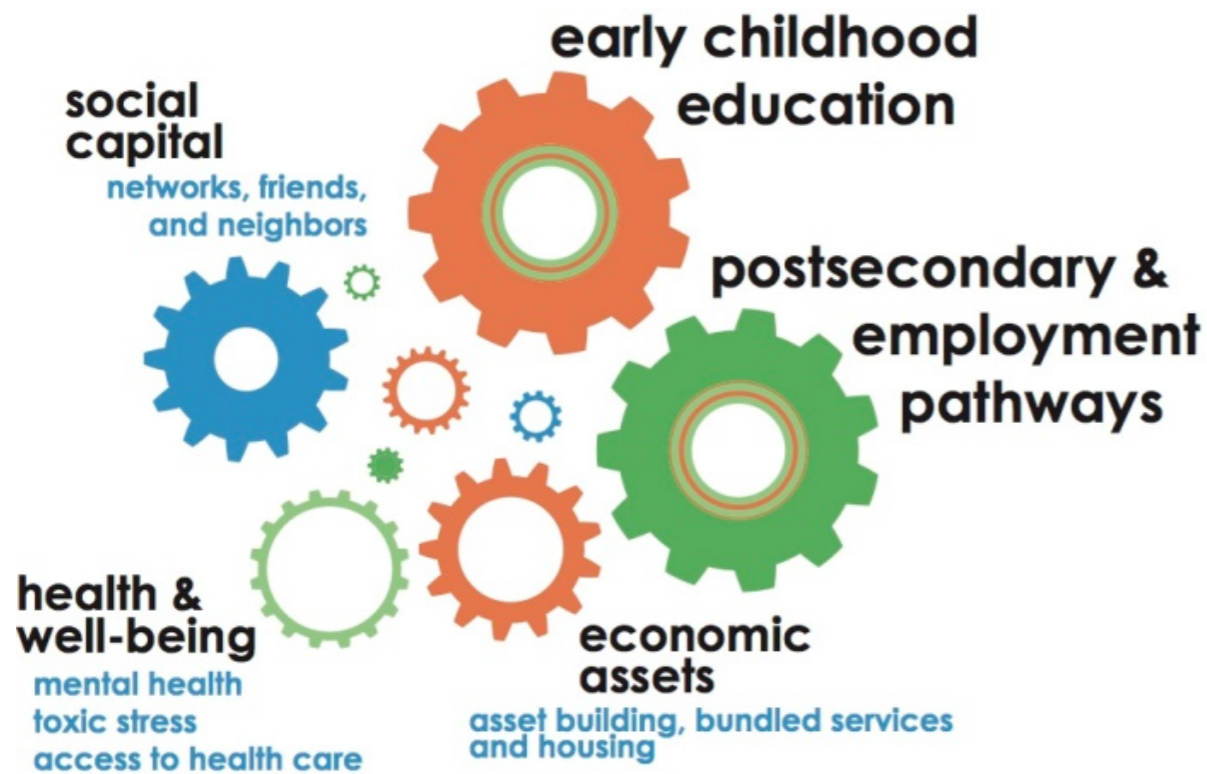
Participant Voice

Policy Integration

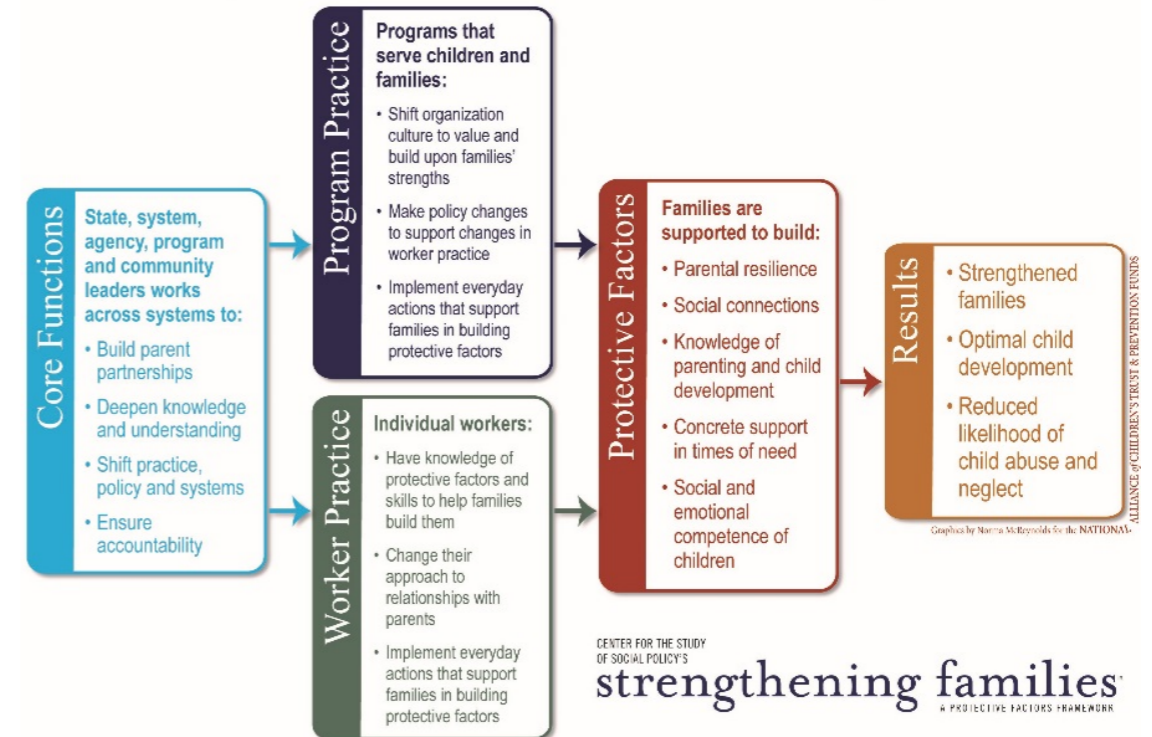
Impact Measurement Considerations

- Capture both child and parent outcomes
- Monitor population level indicators
- Establish data collection needs for program level indicators
 - Looking at using the same questions from the Colorado Child Health Survey and the National Survey on Children's Health at both the population and the program level

Priorities for Strategy Selection



The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families
Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework Logic Model



Strategies

Individualized Services

Home Visiting

Parent Education

Mobility Mentoring and
Financial Literacy

Family Development & Goal
Setting

Respite and Crisis Care

Substance Abuse Treatment &
Support

Intimate Partner Violence
Treatment & Support

Organizational and Practice Change

Evidence-Based Practice

Implementation Science

Work Force Development -
training, coaching,
certifications, core
competencies, quality
standards

Performance Monitoring

Strategies

Agency Collaboration & Community Capacity Building

Integrated Care

Utilizing Technology

Community Effects on Child Maltreatment and Strategies at the Community-Level

Early Learning Communities

Community Norms Change

Policy Reforms

Policy Agenda Setting

Family Friendly Employment

Innovating Federal and State Healthcare Funding

Transforming existing legislation to better meet the needs of families (CCCAP Reform)



Early Childhood Communication Collaborative

PRESENTATION TO THE COMMISSION

September 8, 2016

Findings, Recommendations & Next Steps

ECCC PROJECT GOALS

Raise awareness →

Understand Current Awareness Efforts

Connect parents and caregivers →

Understand parent and caregiver needs and barriers to connection

TIMELINE OF WORK

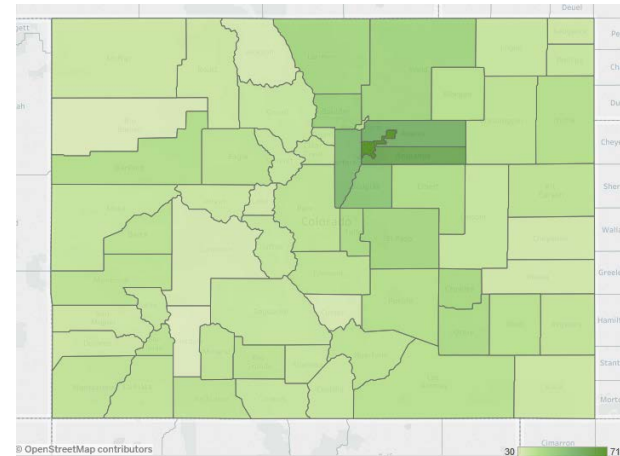
DATE	WORK
Early 2015	Preliminary research informs the creation of the ECCC by the ECLC.
Late 2015	Initial convenings of the Steering Committee and Advisory Partners. Hiring of The Idea Marketing as the communications firm partner. Scope of work based on a four-pronged approach.
Early 2016	Continued convenings of the Steering Committee and Advisory Partners. Continued learning about current parent and caregiver awareness and engagement landscape, new developments and various viewpoints. Staffing change of the ECLC Director.
Spring 2016	Pause to reflect and realign the work plan based on what we were learning.
Summer 2016	Data gathering, including the Mapping Survey of Communications Efforts, national research and planning for focus groups.
August-September	Continued convenings of the Steering Committee and Advisory Partners. Engaging with the data to inform recommendations and considerations for next steps.

EVOLUTION OF THE PROJECT SCOPE:

Original Scope	Realigned Workplan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Convenings of Steering Committee & Advisory Partners▪ Platform & Community of Practice (Mapping)▪ Evaluation▪ Communication Structure (Collective Identifier)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Convenings of Steering Committee & Advisory Partners▪ Mapping of Communications Efforts▪ Parent/Caregiver Focus Groups▪ Report & Recommendations

COMMUNICATIONS LANDSCAPE:

- Current Statewide Reach
- Domains & Top Messages
- Types & Budgets of Orgs Engaging
- Message Targets
- Promotion Tactics
- Communications Needs



<https://public.tableau.com/profile/shift.research.lab#!/vizhome/ECCLC719/Story>

FOCUS GROUPS:

Denver ♦ Eagle ♦ Colorado Springs ♦ Longmont

Areas of Evaluation



Methodology/Audience

- 8 Focus Groups (English and Spanish)
- Parents and Caregivers (FFN) of children under 8
- At least 50% below 3 years old
- Low-income
- Total of 95 participants

FOCUS GROUPS:

THEME UNCOVERED:

OPENNESS

- Eager to learn about all aspects of child development and to receive training, but they do not know where to find it
- Open to search for information if there is a smart platform that suits their needs (Siri-style)

"I am willing to learn because (...) every age is different, every phase, and as a parent you have to constantly be learning."

"We need a smart directory. Something I can tell what I need to and it responds with the places that can offer the solution."

FOCUS GROUPS:

THEME UNCOVERED:

ANXIETY

PARENTS

- Want and feel pressured to be better parents than their own parents
- Distrustful of child care (expensive, treatment of children, and learning speed)

CAREGIVERS

- Concentrate on the safety of the children under their care
- Tension over cultural differences between themselves and the families of the children
- They raise their own children differently

FOCUS GROUPS:

THEME UNCOVERED:

CONFUSION/KNOWLEDGE GAPS

- No consensus about the meaning of "early childhood development"
- Confusion on the age when early childhood begins
- Underestimate the importance of relationships and interactions in brain development (especially among Spanish-speaking)
- Do not know where to find good information or support

"It (brain development) depends on genetics, that is why learning disabilities are inherited."

"Information here isn't readily available."

"Maybe there are places and I just do not know about them because I do not know where to look for information."

FOCUS GROUPS:

THEME UNCOVERED:

LONELINESS AND LACK OF HELP

- Parents feel they are on their own
- The greatest need is for support
- Afraid of asking for help

"I need someone to lean on, you can't lean on air."

"In this community it is almost like it is a bad thing, because they look at you like you are doing something wrong when you ask for help."

FOCUS GROUPS:

THEME UNCOVERED:

DESIRE TO BE VALUED AND SUPPORTED

- Experience external judgment and criticism over their parenting skills
- The greatest need is for support
- Feel undervalued (especially fathers)

"I feel I can never do enough."

"Especially with my autistic son, we get judged all the time."

"We are paying for what our fathers did. They were not close to us and now people do not value fathers."

FOCUS GROUPS:

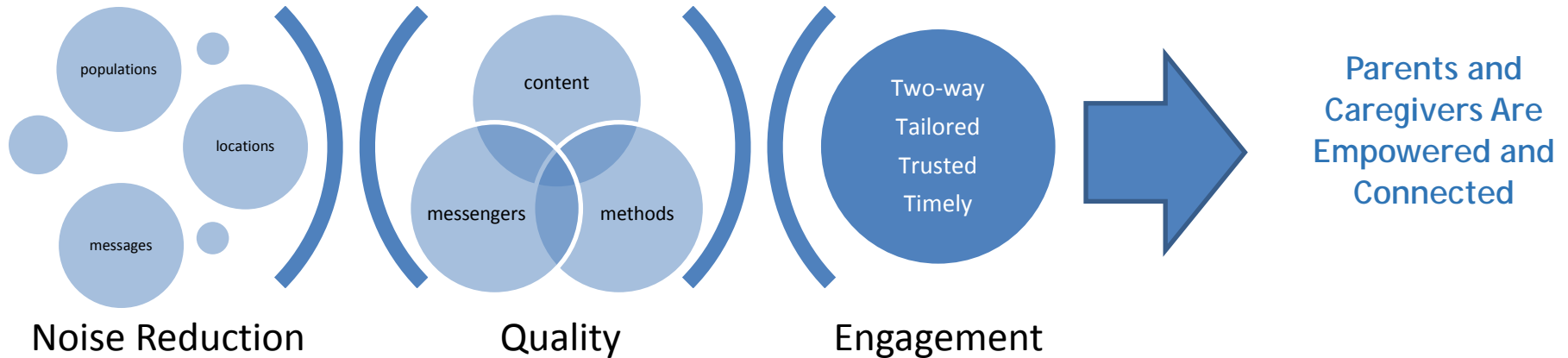
Denver ♦ Eagle ♦ Colorado Springs ♦ Longmont



- Feel judged on everything
- Distrustful of child care
- Learn more/faster from parents
- Caregiving - a natural progression
- Parents - concerned with everything
- Caregivers - concerned with safety
- Cultural differences
- Don't know what EC dev't means
- Brain dev't = genetics and nutrition
- Lack of knowledge on supports
- Want connection (not just srvcs.)
- Want smart-tech

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Areas for Improvement



Whom the Rec Supports



Recommendation Implementers:

- Direct Service Providers
- Local Conveners
- Statewide Conveners
- State-Level Decision-Makers
- Funders
- Business Community

RECOMMENDATIONS:



Consider a campaign
Learn and share
Explore impact

Increase communications expertise
Tailor content and methods to goals
Support the use of tested content

Build capacity in other relationships

Balance messages with interest
Match reach with risk

Emphasize two-way, tailored communication
Increase responsiveness in times of need

RECOMMENDATIONS:

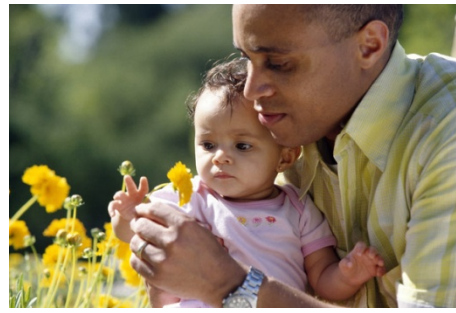
NOISE REDUCTION			
COLORADO	ENVIRONMENTS	RELATIONSHIPS	FAMILY/CHILD
Direct Service Providers	<p>Balance messages with interest. Increase communications efforts on the topics about which families most want to learn.</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: National research; Colorado Survey; Focus Groups.)</i></p>		
Funders	<p>Match reach with risk. Align supply and demand for special populations (e.g., Spanish-speaking families) and for regions of the state with increased risk outcomes (e.g., high rates of maternal depression).</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Colorado Survey; Focus Groups.)</i></p>		
	<p>Consider a campaign. A campaign will be the most effective approach for specific statewide priorities. Exploring the approaches and impact of other statewide efforts (e.g., the child abuse and prevention campaign to promote the statewide hotline), will help determine the optimal conditions for an effective campaign.</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Elementive & Sector Brands reports; Colorado Survey; Focus Groups; Steering Committee; Advisory Partners.)</i></p>		
Statewide Conveners	<p>Learn and Share. Continuously monitor new communications efforts as they arise and share relevant information, tools and resources with stakeholders.</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Elementive & Sector Brands reports; Colorado Survey; Advisory Partners.)</i></p>		

RECOMMENDATIONS:

QUALITY			
COLORADO	ENVIRONMENTS	RELATIONSHIPS	FAMILY/CHILD
Local Conveners	<p>Increase messengers' communications expertise. Provide opportunities to learn and share information on effective communications delivery – especially strategies that lead to engagement – programs and services with limited capacity. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Colorado Survey; Steering Committee.)</i></p>		
	<p>Tailor content and methods to goals. Consider the variety of purposes for communications and respond appropriately with impactful messages and tactics. Different words and phrases may increase general public support for a program but may not encourage individual parents and caregivers to enroll. Different tactics (e.g., websites, social media, handouts) are differentially effective, depending on goals. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Advisory Partners; Focus Groups.)</i></p>		
Funders & State-Level Decision-Makers	<p>Support the use of high-quality, tested content. Encourage the use of high-quality and effective messages, either by encouraging the evaluation of messages and tools or utilizing messages or frames that have been researched and tested. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Colorado Survey, Steering Committee, Advisory Partners)</i></p>		
	<p>Explore impact. Support the exploration of what is working, and what is not, for Colorado parents and caregivers. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Colorado survey.)</i></p>		

RECOMMENDATIONS:

ENGAGEMENT			
COLORADO	ENVIRONMENTS	RELATIONSHIPS	FAMILY/CHILD
Direct Service Providers	<p>Emphasize two-way, tailored communication. Two-way communication with trusted partners is still a preferred method especially in times of great stress, but technology has benefits also. Explore how technology may complement in-person communication or be more responsive and tailored (e.g., live chat capabilities) to meet the needs of parents and caregivers.</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: National research; Steering Committee, Advisory Partners; Focus Groups.)</i></p>		
	<p>Increase responsiveness in times of need. Parents and caregivers often feel most alone when they are most stressed and in need. Explore how to provide more support when most needed especially for hard-to-reach parents and caregivers that are not already engaged in programming.</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: National research; Focus Groups.)</i></p>		
Business Community	<p>Build capacity in other relationships. Build capacity with the myriad of family, friends and neighbors – especially those individuals that parents indicate they most often seek out for advice. Communities are filled with adults that interact with parents, caregivers and children (e.g., coaches, teachers, grandparents); building their capacity to communicate and model developmentally appropriate information will create a web of support. Explore avenues for training and engagement of these adults (e.g., coaches' clinics, church groups and senior organizations).</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Steering Committee; Advisory Partners.)</i></p>		



Questions & Next Steps

Report and Appendices (with data dashboards) will be available at

www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org

end of September

Early Childhood Communication Collaborative

ECLC
Early Childhood Leadership Commission



Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Early Childhood Communication Efforts in Colorado

September 2016

DRAFT



"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."

- Rachel Carson



Early Childhood Communication Efforts in Colorado

Dear Early Childhood Stakeholder,

Raising and caring for young children is the most important, and challenging, work in an adult's life. In order to ensure Colorado's future generations achieve their full potential, we have an obligation to support parents' and caregivers' understanding of and engagement in their relationships with young children. More than that, according to 2014 survey results from a national polling group, ensuring children get a strong start in life is a *top priority* for Coloradans, second only to increasing jobs and economic growth, and well ahead of reducing the tax burden on families.

We all have a role to play in supporting parents and caregivers both for the benefit of Colorado's children and for the future economic prosperity of the state. The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC), Colorado's state advisory council for early childhood, is charged to develop strategies to increase the access, quality, and equity of services and supports for pregnant women and children birth through age eight. A cornerstone of this work is effective communications with parents and caregivers.

In 2015, the ECLC designed the Early Childhood Communication Collaborative to raise awareness of the important role parents and caregivers have in child development; highlight the number and variety of parent and caregiver communication and engagement efforts; and, ultimately, find ways to better connect with and support parents and caregivers.

We are pleased to present this report of the Early Childhood Communication Collaborative, *Early Childhood Communication Efforts in Colorado*, which examines the state of efforts from the perspective of parents, caregivers, and providers. The report also provides recommendations for local and state decision-makers, the business and philanthropic communities, and service providers to advance effective education and engagement for parents and caregivers concerning early childhood.

We hope this report spurs further ideas and actions on behalf of pregnant women and children birth through age eight so that parents and caregivers feel fully informed and supported in their work to ensure every child in their care is valued, healthy, and thriving.

Sincerely,

Barbara Grogan
ECLC Co-Chair

Anna Jo Haynes
ECLC Co-Chair

Lt. Governor Donna Lynne
ECLC Co-Chair

Executive Summary

Parents and caregivers are a young child's first and most important teacher. Interactions between children and these adults lay the foundation for a host of developmental outcomes including cognitive, social-emotional, and physical health. It is imperative that parents and caregivers (including Family, Friend, and Neighbor caregivers) understand how to support young children's optimal development and consistently use that knowledge in their role as caregivers.

Unfortunately, despite a myriad of efforts across the state, many Colorado parents and caregivers indicate they don't know where to turn for information and support. In addition, they often feel judged, inadequate, and alone when they are most stressed about their relationships with children in their care.

The Early Childhood Communication Collaborative conducted a statewide survey of communications efforts that are aimed at reaching parents and caregivers with information or resources regarding early childhood, prenatal through age eight. More than 380 respondents from a variety of organizations provided information about a broad variety of communications efforts.

Currently, every county in the state reports a variety of communications efforts, with even the most remote, least populous areas reporting a minimum of 30 efforts. Most efforts are small, many reaching less than 2,000 families, and are centered around families of children five years and younger. Most use low-cost tactics and, due to limited budgets, few are able to evaluate the impact of their efforts. Surprisingly few programs indicate that they focus on special populations like Spanish-speaking families. By and large, providers want research and tools to help them become more effective in their communications efforts.

Focus groups with parents and caregivers indicate, despite the numerous communications efforts in every county in the state, there is almost universal confusion about what information is available on child development and where to find it. While parents and caregivers express a strong desire to learn, even basic information is not cutting through the clutter; there is no consensus even about what "early childhood development means" and how and when development occurs. Parents and caregivers want to feel engaged and supported within their communities but, instead, often feel isolated. This is especially true in the more rural regions of the state.

Eleven recommendations are offered and are organized around three major areas for improvement:

- Reduce communication "noise" resulting from inconsistencies or duplicate efforts that are unevenly targeted to families and caregivers in regions with different communication needs.
- Increase the quality of communications, including the use of effective content, enhanced communications training for trusted messengers that connect with parents and caregivers, and a heightened focus on effective tactics.
- Provide greater emphasis on the two-way, responsive engagement of parents and caregivers that will generate more positive outcomes for children's cognitive and social development.

The Early Childhood Leadership Commission will work in partnership with others to prioritize implementation of these recommendations in the coming year.

Introduction

Colorado prospers when our future leaders, young children across the state, receive the support they need to be valued, healthy, and thriving from professionals, environments, and entire communities. That support starts with communications that convey the right information at the right time and in the right way to engage and empower parents and caregivers in their challenging role.

Unfortunately, despite a myriad of efforts across the state, many Colorado parents and caregivers indicate they don't know where to turn for information and support. In addition, they often feel judged, inadequate, and alone when they are most stressed about their relationships with children in their care. Instead, these adults should feel supported by the communities in which they live so that no one is afraid to reach out when they need help. Coloradans care about parents and caregivers; we must do better in conveying support.

The *Early Childhood Colorado Framework*, or *Framework*, (Appendix I), the shared vision for young children and families, outlines the state's core outcomes for access, quality, and equity in the areas of Family Support and Education, Health and Well-Being, and Early Learning and Development. The *Framework* illustrates the importance of working collectively at all levels of the early childhood system — from the adults who directly interact with children, to administrators, business and community leaders, and elected officials.

With the child and family at the center of the *Framework*, coordinated action to **promote and share knowledge** and **connect and empower families** are core strategies to achieve optimal outcomes. These priority strategies for action must be effectively implemented across multiple circles of influence – within relationships, environments, and local and state systems (below).



This report summarizes the current Colorado communications landscape and offers a set of recommendations to reduce the noise, increase the quality of parent and caregiver messaging, and boost engagement to mobilize and inspire parents and caregivers toward action. Let's work together to create a culture of support for the first and most important teachers of young Coloradans so that we achieve our vision that all children are valued, healthy and thriving.

The National Context

Across the nation, states are grappling with how to best support parents and caregivers given evolving demographics. Today, almost half of the nation's young children (birth through five years of age) live in low-income households, those with an annual income of \$44,700 for a family of four. Of all major industrialized countries, currently children in the United States are more likely to live in single-parent households, mostly headed by mothers.

Parents want what is best for their children. Multiple national studies have found that parents would like to know more about developmental milestones and benchmarks. Parents who know more are more likely to have quality interactions that support their child's healthy development.

Parents want knowledge and believe that effective parenting can be learned. But parents experiencing issues such as poverty, a single-parent household, low-educational attainment, language barriers, and cultural or geographic isolation may be particularly challenged to find the information and support they desire to best help their young children develop. Many parents say they lack the information and support needed to assist them. Sadly, half of parents indicate they are not getting the support they need during the most critical moments when they feel overwhelmed or stressed.

While parents and caregivers crave knowledge, they also indicate they don't know where to turn for information. This is despite the fact that we are living in the midst of an information explosion that has revolutionized our knowledge sharing and seeking behavior. Nationally, almost nine of ten adults (87%) are active internet users, three in five (59%) are active social media users, and there are more mobile phone subscriptions than the entire U.S. population (106%).⁴



Source: We are Social's *Digital in 2016* report

Yet mothers and fathers are overwhelmed by the sources of help and generally question the quality of the information. Sixty-eight percent say there is *so much information available* it is hard to know who to trust; this feeling is more true of fathers (47%) than of mothers (29%).

Despite, or perhaps because of, the overwhelming amount of information and widespread internet use, parents consistently turn to trusted relationships for advice. The top three resources most often accessed by parents and their perceived effectiveness include:

RESOURCE	EFFECTIVENESS	USAGE
The way my parents raised me ¹	64%	91%
Medical professionals like the pediatrician	62%	89%
My partner/my child's other parent	66%	89%

Source: ZERO TO THREE's *National Parent Survey*

Similarly to parents, national research indicates that informal caregivers turn to trusted relationships for support as well. Caregivers often assume their role after taking care of their own child and then moving to care for the children of other relatives and neighbors; thus, these relationships are strong and foundational. Caregivers also crave information and training but often don't know where to turn for information and services.

The Colorado Context

Today, almost 42% of Colorado's young children (birth through five years of age) live in low-income households. For Colorado's Hispanic/Latino and Black/African-American children, this is even more pronounced. Fortunately, with a recovering state economy, poverty rates are declining after several years of growth.

Colorado's population continues to shift. Nearly one-third of Colorado children (31%) are Hispanic/Latino, and 46% of Colorado's student population is students of color. Approximately 14% of students are English Language Learners. Approximately 31% of Colorado children live in single-parent households and 22.8% of children are born to single-mothers.

While we still do not have statewide information about how developmentally ready children are for kindergarten, we do know that by the end of third grade, many children are not reaching critical learning milestones. In fact, 58% of Colorado 4th graders are not proficient in reading, and the achievement gap among children of color and children living in poverty or low-income families is significantly more pronounced.

Across the state, people are working to change community conditions to better ensure children are supported to thrive. The *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* (below) details a number of desired outcomes that are known to increase a child's chances for success including the bolstering of a family's knowledge to support healthy development.

¹ This finding is not consistent across all demographics; parents in more challenging circumstances indicate a desire to parent differently, and "break the cycle" of their own childhood experience.

QUALITY

- Family knowledge and capacity support children’s healthy development and learning
- Families advocate for high quality comprehensive services and supports that lead to future success

Source: *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* Family Support & Education Quality Outcomes

To achieve these desired outcomes, two major *Framework* strategies are necessary:

- Promote and Share Knowledge
- Connect and Empower Families

In 2015, the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) created the Early Childhood Communication Collaborative (ECCC) in response to recent state research that examined a select number of parent awareness campaigns among the early childhood industry across Colorado and found:

- An uneven saturation of messages and messengers across the state.
- Uneven parent and caregiver awareness of messages in both formal and informal childcare settings.
- Many exemplary efforts, but limited understanding of the overall impact of the combined efforts.

The ECCC was charged to explore the coordination of existing and emerging parent and caregiver awareness and engagement efforts in Colorado. The work of the ECCC included convenings of an ECLC-appointed Steering Committee to guide the work (Appendix III) and solicit input from a broad-based Advisory Partner group to serve as subject-matter experts (Appendix IV).

This broader context is complicated and multi-faceted. There are home visiting programs, family resource centers, parenting workshops, learning communities for informal caregivers, and texting and mobile applications. In addition to early childhood-focused organizations, many other entities such as libraries, public health, schools, and parks and recreation systems are striving to reach parents and caregivers with information and services. However, despite this rich environment and strong desire to communicate with parents and caregivers, efforts do not always reach those for whom they are intended. There remains a sense of isolation for parents and caregivers, a lack of knowledge about early childhood development, and a dearth of targeted information about where to turn for support.

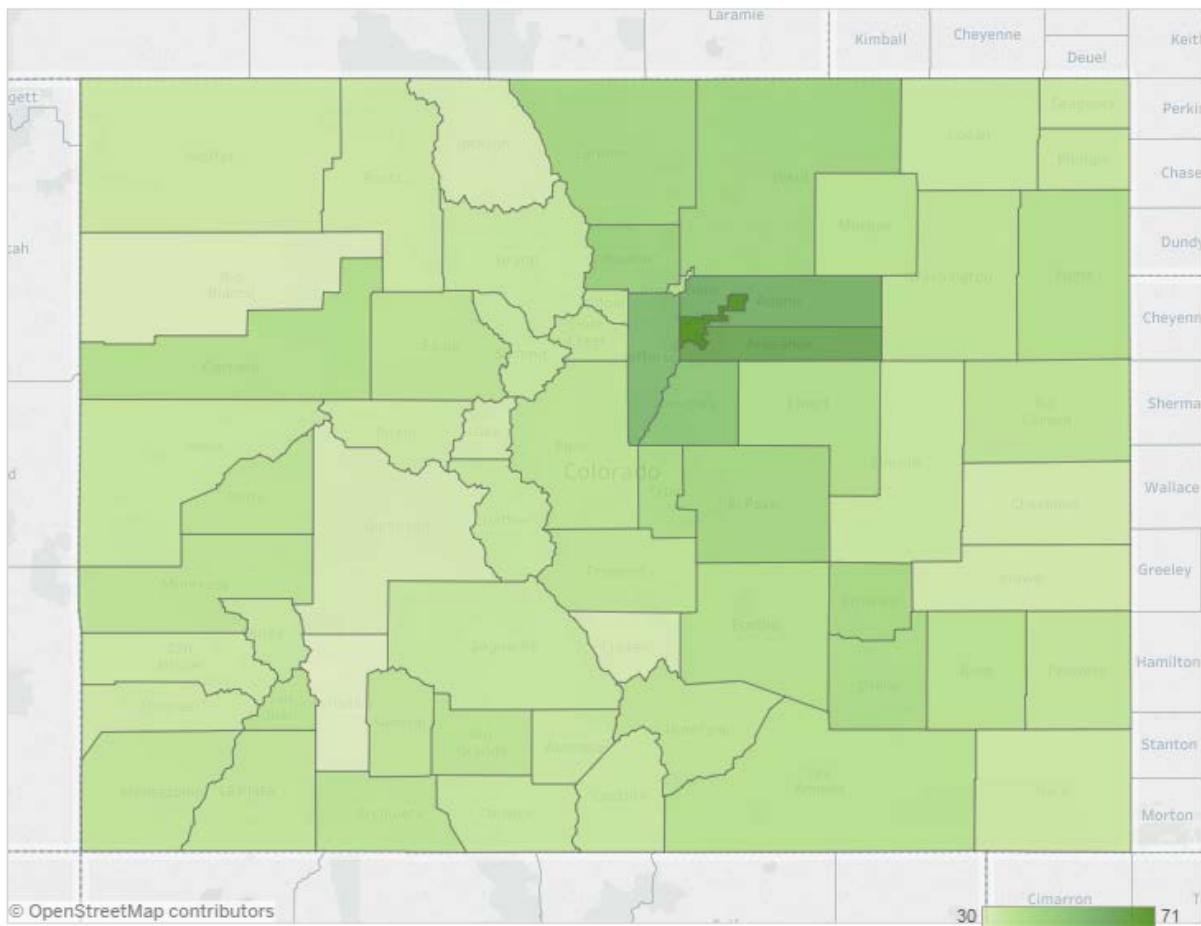
The results are detailed in this report, along with recommendations generated through robust discussion about parents, caregivers, messages, and messengers with numerous partners, including the ECCC Steering Committee and the Advisory Partners. These recommendations focused on noise reduction, quality, and parent and caregiver engagement. They recognize important opportunities available at both the local and state level to further support parents and caregivers in their important role of helping young children thrive.

Communications Efforts in Colorado

The Early Childhood Communication Collaborative conducted a statewide survey of communications efforts aimed at reaching parents and caregivers with information or resources regarding early childhood, prenatal through age eight. More than 380 respondents from a variety of organizations provided information about a variety of communications efforts. The following are some major findings.

A Multitude of Messages Across the State

Currently, communications efforts reach every county in the state, with even the most remote, least populous areas reporting a minimum of 30 efforts. Primary messages to parents, caregivers, and children are almost evenly targeted across the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* domains of Family Support and Education, Health and Well-Being, and Learning and Development.



Top 5 Primary Message

Primary

Family Support & Education: Access to family supports	29
Family Support & Education: Parent/caregiver training and support services	35
Health & Well-Being: Health	33
Learning & Development: Early childhood development	26
Learning & Development: Early literacy	24

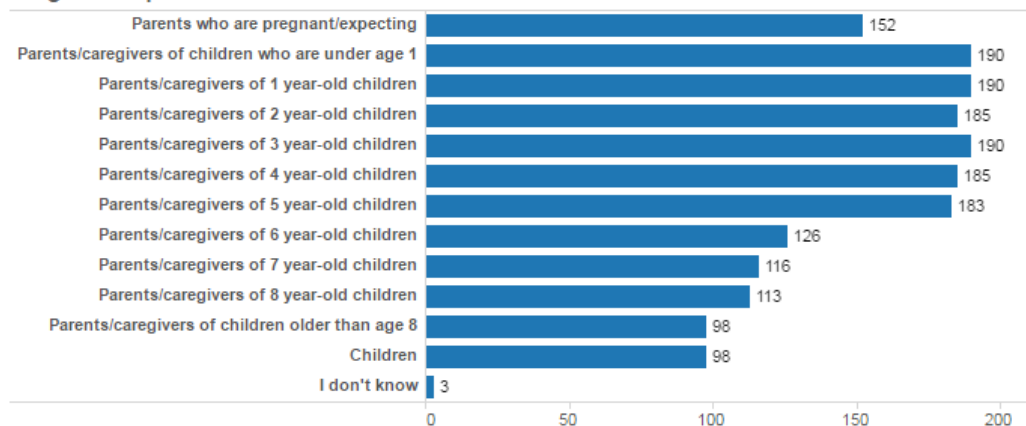
Overall Message

Family Support & Education: Access to family supports	66
Family Support & Education: Family, friend and neighbor support	15
Family Support & Education: Parent/caregiver training and support services	87
Family Support & Education: Policy/advocacy	10
Health & Well-Being: Child abuse prevention	34
Health & Well-Being: Dental/Oral Health	9
Health & Well-Being: Early screening/special needs	29
Health & Well-Being: Health	53
Health & Well-Being: Immunization	19
Health & Well-Being: Maternal depression	7
Health & Well-Being: Mental health	29
Health & Well-Being: Nutrition/obesity	17
Health & Well-Being: Physical activity	8
Health & Well-Being: Pregnancy/prenatal health	16
Health & Well-Being: Safety	6
Health & Well-Being: Substance issues/prevention (drugs, smoking, alcohol)	8
Health & Well-Being: Toxic stress	5
Learning & Development: Brain building	23
Learning & Development: Child care or preschool access	19
Learning & Development: Child care or preschool quality	23
Learning & Development: Early childhood development	68
Learning & Development: Early literacy	39
Learning & Development: K-12 school options	4
Learning & Development: School readiness	48
Learning & Development: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)	10

A Variety of Ages Served, Including Children

Efforts are centered around parents and caregivers of children five years and younger, although surprisingly almost 100 efforts are targeted specifically to children, not adults Half of respondents indicate their efforts reach 2,000 or fewer children and families.

Targeted Population



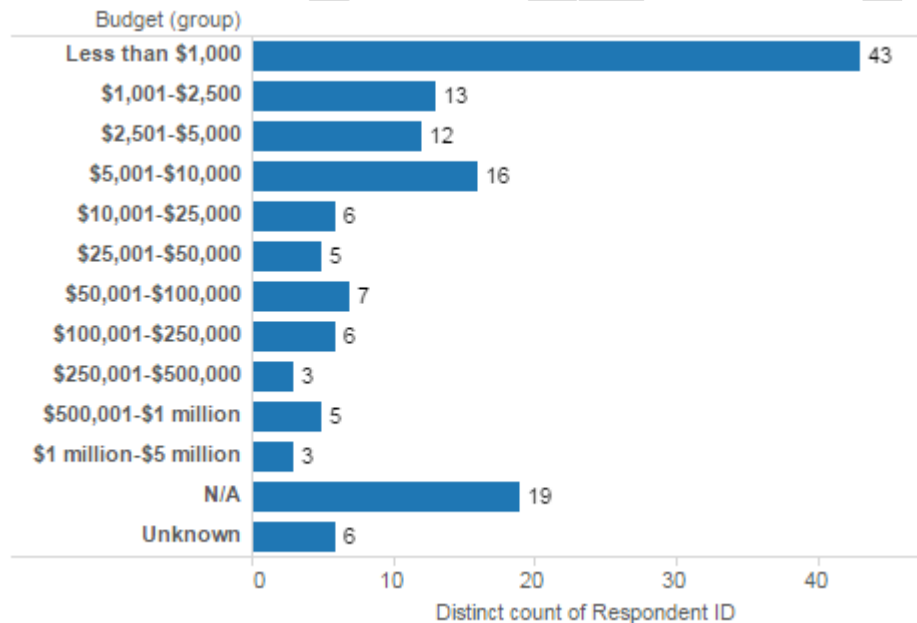
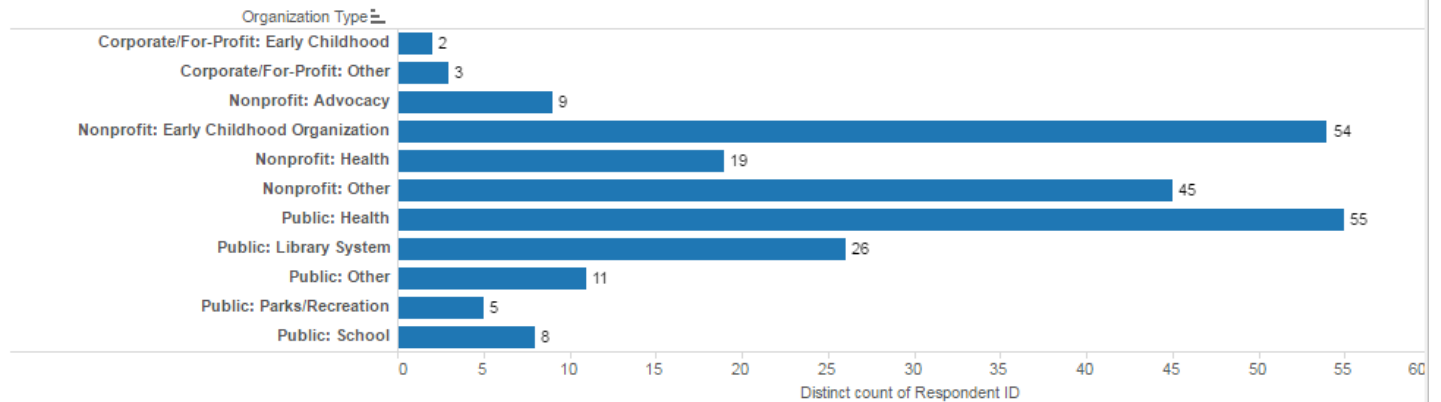
How many served

0-50	5
51-100	15
101-250	18
251-500	17
501-1,000	15
1,001-2,000	26
2,001-5,000	27
5,001-10,000	16
10,001-20,000	14
20,001-40,000	9
Over 40,000	27
N/A	5
Unknown	43

A Variety of Organizations with Relatively Lean Efforts

Organizations that span service sectors are actively communicating to parents and caregivers. However, budgets are lean, meaning outreach may not be as broad or deep as is desired. (Respondents that indicated small or unknown communications budgets likely have communications efforts that are integrated into program services.)

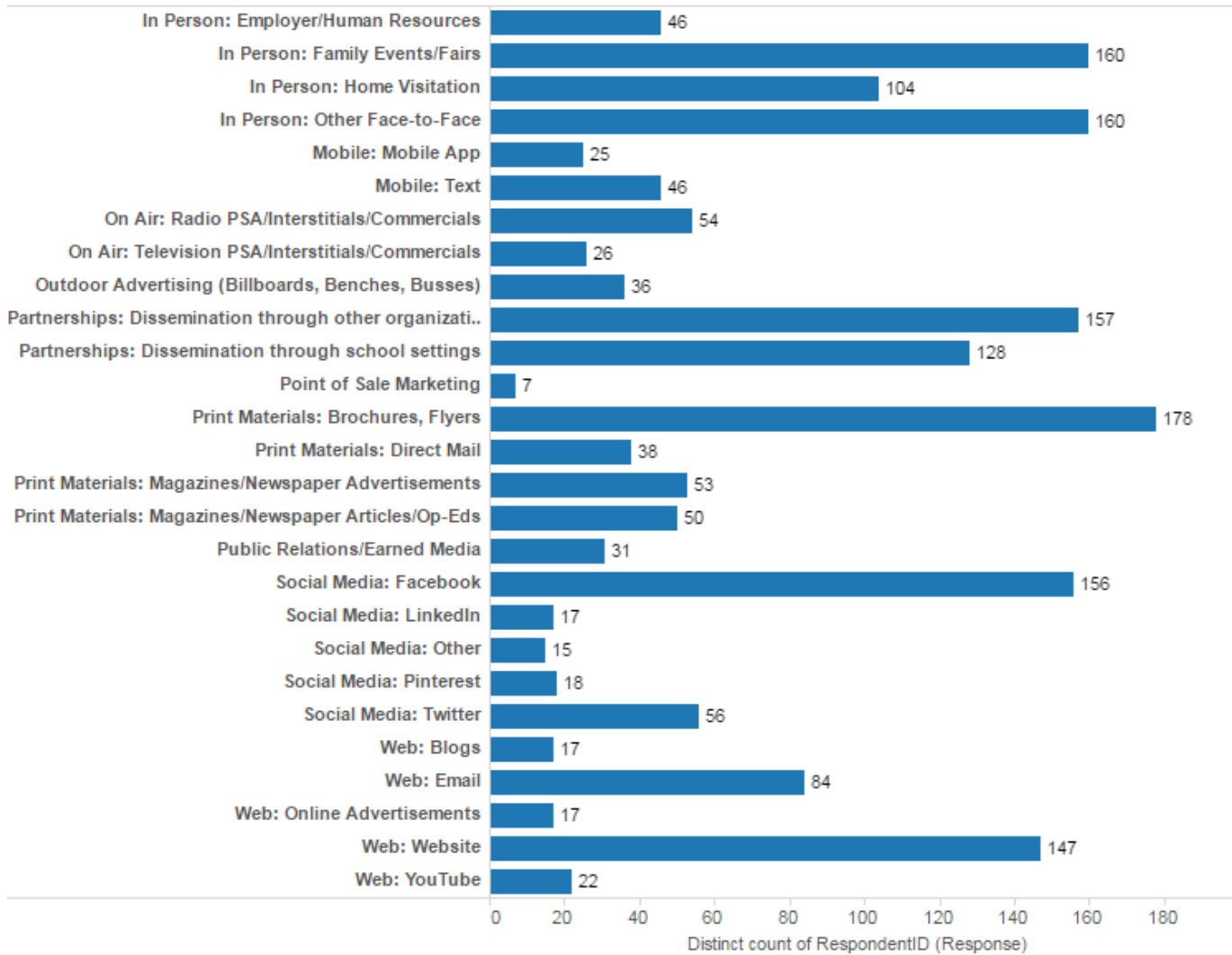
Organization Type



Budgets Limit Communications Approach and Impact is Unknown

Not surprisingly, the majority of communications tactics are low cost approaches such as in-person communication, flyers, and social media. Little is known about the impact and effectiveness of communications efforts. Less than 31% of organizational respondents indicated that they had engaged in an evaluation of their communications effort.

Tactics



Tailoring to Risk

For those who indicated their efforts target special populations, the vast majority are generally communicating with low-income children and families. Surprisingly, only one percent indicate they are targeting families that are English Language Learners (two efforts) or specifically Spanish speaking families (three efforts), despite comprising 14% of the overall child population. Additionally, only one percent of efforts target children with special needs. This finding is surprising, given our knowledge about the number of supports and services directed to certain populations (e.g., English Language Learners). More research is needed to understand this finding and ensure communications are both appropriately targeted and culturally relevant.

Deepening Expertise

Overall, respondents indicate a strong desire for research and tools that would strengthen the impact of their efforts. Respondents were asked to rank and prioritize five options for additional communications support. Of those that responded to this question, one in four indicate that research around impactful messages and strategies is a top need (ranked as the first or second priority), and almost 30% indicate

they are seeking a resource of effective messages across various areas of early childhood development. Over 100 respondents ranked the need for a statewide communications effort that would symbolize Colorado's broader commitment to early childhood development as one of their top three priorities.

The Colorado Parent and Caregiver Perspective

The Early Childhood Communication Collaborative conducted eight focus groups of parents and caregivers in four Colorado communities (four in English and four in Spanish in the communities of Denver, Eagle, Longmont and Colorado Springs). There were a total of 95 participants, at least half of whom were caring for children below age 3. All participants were from low income households (less than \$45,000 per year) and at least 70% were not engaged in early childhood supports and services.

The focus groups were intended to evaluate parent and caregiver understanding of the importance of early childhood development, explore anxiety points, gauge the barriers to accessing information and services, and test, locally, some of the findings from the 2016 Zero to Three National Parent Survey. Major themes uncovered in these focus groups can be categorized as follows: Openness, Anxiety, Confusion/Knowledge Gaps, Loneliness and Lack of Help, and Desire to be Valued and Supported.

<INSERT RELEVANT INFOGRAPHICS>

Openness. Colorado parents and caregivers are eager to learn about all aspects of child development and are open to support and training. However, they do not know where to find the support they want. Parents and caregivers are open to actively searching for information to help with child development if the information is provided in a way that suits their needs. All participants expressed a need for a smart directory (Siri-style) that can provide up-to-date information about where to go for the specific resources and services. "We need a smart directory that I can tell it what I need, and it responds with the places that can offer the solution It needs to be smart, like Siri on your phone."

Anxiety. Parents want and feel pressured to be better parents than their own parents. However, they also affirmed that still they turn to their own parents and grandparents for advice and information. (This finding is consistent with the National Parent Survey.) Parents are concerned about *everything* involving their children: their learning, safety, health, well-being.

Parents have concerns about the option of child care, due both to expense and to concerns about how their children will be treated (especially if the child is not verbal and, thus, can't report about their day). Parents also expressed that they felt that their children learn more and learn faster at home.

Caregivers are primarily concerned about the safety of the children under their care. Caregivers are also concerned about the cultural differences between themselves and the families of the children under their care; these differences may impact their approach to care. Consequently, there is a gap between the approach caregivers use in raising their own children versus the children under their care. "I raise my children in a totally different way because each family is different and I want to avoid problems with the parents."

Confusion/Knowledge Gaps. Among parents and caregivers there is no consensus about what the term "early childhood development" even means. Consistent across all participants was a sense that major knowledge and skill development begins *after the age of one*, with some indicating major development begins closer to age five. Only a handful of focus group participant believed that early childhood

development started during pregnancy or at birth; the vast majority (89 participants) believed child development starts after the first year of age.

While most parents and caregivers correctly believe that brain development begins during pregnancy, they underestimate the importance of relationships and interactions once a child is born. A *plant metaphor* seemed to best reflect their ideas of brain development, with a healthy brain being the result of genetics and nutrition. Once the child is born, the belief is that brain develops can be impacted by nutrition – but, by and large, it is impacted by is genetics and cannot be changed. It is important to note that the knowledge gap is especially marked among Spanish-speaking participants.

Among focus group participants, there is universal confusion about where to find good information or support concerning child development. Almost all of the parents and caregivers were not able to name a single local resource that could provide them trusted information or support.

Loneliness and Lack of Help. Regarding their parenting role, there is a sense of loneliness: parents feel they are on their own. All parents expressed that their greatest need is for support. “I need someone to lean on, you can’t lean on air”. This sense of loneliness was amplified in the rural areas.

Both parents and caregivers expressed a belief that, “it takes a village” to raise a child, and many of them are seeking that “village” of individuals to help support their efforts, but without luck. However, parents are afraid and overly cautious about the kind of people that are around their children. “I do not trust anybody to take care of my kids because of things that happened to me”, “You have to be careful who watches your kid, I was fortunate I had my mom.”

Lastly, most young parents and caregivers noted they are afraid of asking for help. “In this community it is almost like it is a bad thing, because they look at you like you are doing something wrong when you ask for help.”

Desire to be Valued and Supported. Parents and caregivers feel a lot of pressure. They experience a great deal of external judgment and criticism over their parenting skills. They feel that they can never do enough. “Especially with my autistic son, we get judged all the time. I’ve parented in a number of states and there are judgmental people all over, but here (...) is the worst.”

They want to know that other community members value and care for them in their role as parents and caregivers. This sense of being undervalued was most evident among fathers. “We are paying for what our fathers did. They were not close to us and now people do not value fathers like me that really care and dedicate to his kids.”

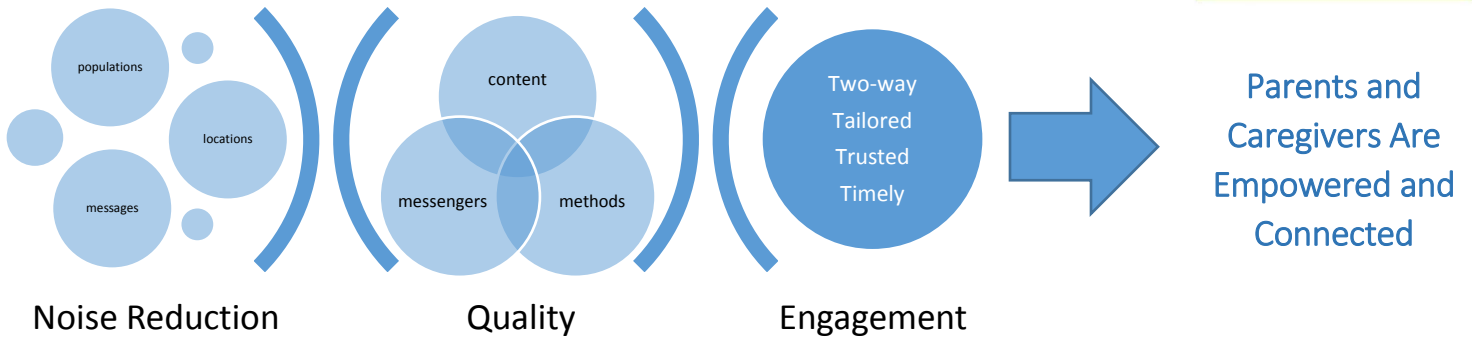
Early Childhood Communication Collaborative Recommendations

The Early Childhood Communication Collaborative offers the following eleven recommendations for consideration, based on information obtained through the state survey and focus groups, ECCC Steering Committee and Advisory Partners' input, and prior state research and national information. Recommendations, rooted in the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework*, are organized around three major areas for improvement:

- **Reduce communication “noise”** resulting from inconsistencies or duplicate efforts that are unevenly targeted to families and caregivers in regions with different communications' needs.
- **Increase the quality of communications**, including the use of effective content, enhanced communications training for trusted messengers that connect with parents and caregivers, and a heightened focus on effective tactics.
- **Provide greater emphasis on the two-way, responsive engagement of parents and caregivers** that will generate more positive outcomes for children's cognitive and social development.

The following chart offers a set of recommendations in each of these areas. Recommendations are color-coded to the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* circles of influence to indicate for whom the recommendation provides the most support – family/child, relationships such as caregivers and other professionals, environments such as programs or neighborhoods, or local and state systems. The left column indicates the category of stakeholder that might provide leadership in implementation efforts.

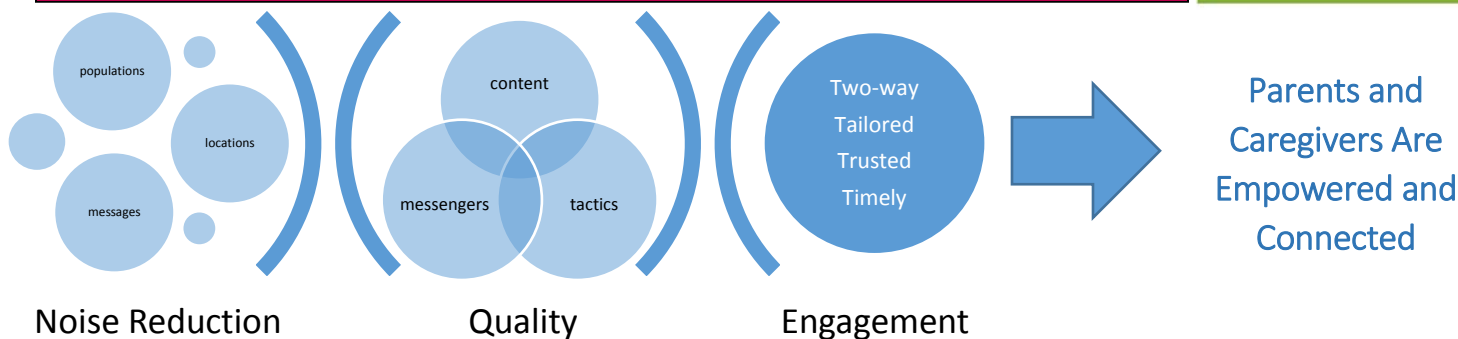
Early Childhood Communication Collaborative Recommendations



NOISE REDUCTION

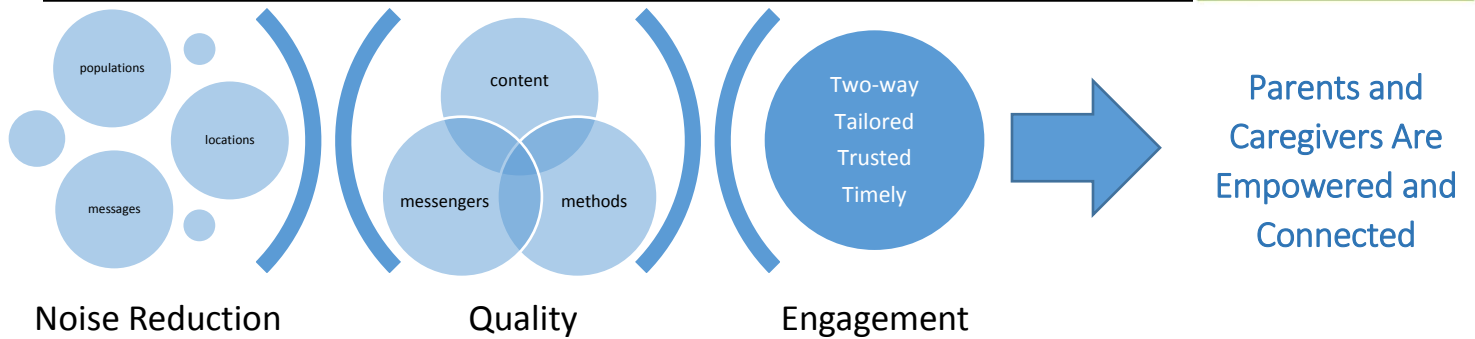
	COLORADO	ENVIRONMENTS	RELATIONSHIPS	FAMILY/CHILD
Direct Service Providers	<p>Balance messages with interest. Increase communications efforts on the topics about which families most want to learn. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: National research; Colorado Survey; Focus Groups.)</i></p>			
Funders	<p>Match reach with risk. Align supply and demand for special populations (e.g., Spanish-speaking families) and for regions of the state with increased risk outcomes (e.g., high rates of maternal depression). <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Colorado Survey; Focus Groups.)</i></p>			
	<p>Consider a campaign. A campaign will be the most effective approach for specific statewide priorities. Exploring the approaches and impact of other statewide efforts (e.g., the child abuse and prevention campaign to promote the statewide hotline), will help determine the optimal conditions for an effective campaign. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Elementive & Sector Brands reports; Colorado Survey; Focus Groups; Steering Committee; Advisory Partners.)</i></p>			
Statewide Conveners	<p>Learn and Share. Continuously monitor new communications efforts as they arise and share relevant information, tools and resources with stakeholders. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Elementive & Sector Brands reports; Colorado Survey; Advisory Partners.)</i></p>			

Early Childhood Communication Collaborative Recommendations



QUALITY				
	COLORADO	ENVIRONMENTS	RELATIONSHIPS	FAMILY/CHILD
Local Conveners	<p>Increase messengers' communications expertise. Provide opportunities to learn and share information on effective communications delivery – especially strategies that lead to engagement – programs and services with limited capacity. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Colorado Survey; Steering Committee.)</i></p>			
	<p>Tailor content and methods to goals. Consider the variety of purposes for communications and respond appropriately with impactful messages and tactics. Different words and phrases may increase general public support for a program but may not encourage individual parents and caregivers to enroll. Different tactics (e.g., websites, social media, handouts) are differentially effective, depending on goals. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Advisory Partners; Focus Groups.)</i></p>			
Funders & State-Level Decision-Makers	<p>Support the use of high-quality, tested content. Encourage the use of high-quality and effective messages, either by encouraging the evaluation of messages and tools or utilizing messages or frames that have been researched and tested. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Colorado Survey, Steering Committee, Advisory Partners)</i></p>			
	<p>Explore impact. Support the exploration of what is working, and what is not, for Colorado parents and caregivers. <i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Colorado survey.)</i></p>			

Early Childhood Communication Collaborative Recommendations



ENGAGEMENT

	COLORADO	ENVIRONMENTS	RELATIONSHIPS	FAMILY/CHILD
Direct Service Providers	<p>Emphasize two-way, tailored communication. Two-way communication with trusted partners is still a preferred method especially in times of great stress, but technology has benefits also. Explore how technology may complement in-person communication or be more responsive and tailored (e.g., live chat capabilities) to meet the needs of parents and caregivers.</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: National research; Steering Committee, Advisory Partners; Focus Groups.)</i></p>			
	<p>Increase responsiveness in times of need. Parents and caregivers often feel most alone when they are most stressed and in need. Explore how to provide more support when most needed especially for hard-to-reach parents and caregivers that are not already engaged in programming.</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: National research; Focus Groups.)</i></p>			
Business Community	<p>Build capacity in other relationships. Build capacity with the myriad of family, friends and neighbors – especially those individuals that parents indicate they most often seek out for advice. Communities are filled with adults that interact with parents, caregivers and children (e.g., coaches, teachers, grandparents); building their capacity to communicate and model developmentally appropriate information will create a web of support. Explore avenues for training and engagement of these adults (e.g., coaches’ clinics, church groups and senior organizations).</p> <p><i>(Source(s) behind this recommendation: Steering Committee; Advisory Partners.)</i></p>			

Next Steps

As a result of this effort, the Early Childhood Leadership Commission and stakeholders in this effort understand more acutely the needs of parents and caregivers in their desire to be the best, first, and most important teacher of young children in their care. We understand so much more about the myriad of efforts across the state aiming to support parents and caregivers. We know that great, effective work is happening and is reaching many families. We also have a sense of how we're falling short in communications and how to make improvements in the areas of noise reduction, quality, and engagement.

We all have a role to play in helping the parents and caregivers that are raising the next generation of Coloradans to reach their developmental potential. The Early Childhood Leadership Commission believes strongly that improving the effectiveness of parent and caregiver awareness and engagement will best be achieved through a partnership that includes businesses, state and local government, foundations, direct service providers, and most importantly, the parents and caregivers at the center of this work.

The ECLC will continue to foster these partnerships and garner commitment from leaders within the early childhood system to ensure families benefit from communications efforts that engage them and help them feel more supported and become more empowered to do the best for the children in their care.

We hope you join us in these efforts, which will help to ensure our vision that every young child is valued, healthy and thriving.

Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to the following foundations for generously supporting this work: Ben and Lucy Ana Walton Fund of the Walton Family Foundation, Chambers Family Foundation, The Piton Foundation at Gary Community Investments, Rose Community Foundation, and the Colorado Department of Human Services – Office of Early Childhood. Additionally, we would like to recognize the work of the Early Childhood Communication Collaborative Steering Committee and Early Childhood Communication Collaborative Advisory Partners who came together under the leadership of co-chairs, Elsa Holguín of Rose Community Foundation and Tom Massey of the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, and the facilitation of Early Milestones Colorado, to provide a rich and diverse set of perspectives that informed the recommendations set forth in this report. We would also like to thank the over 350 organizations throughout the state of Colorado that responded to the Mapping Survey of Communications Efforts as well as Mingming Zhang and Matt Barry of The Piton Foundation at Gary Community Investments for their contributions in data mapping which enabled the Early Childhood Communication Collaborative to better understand the landscape of parent and caregiver awareness and engagement efforts throughout Colorado. We sincerely appreciate the insights and guidance put forth throughout the effort by Anne Anderson, Letty Bass, Steffanie Clothier, Gerri Gomez Howard, and Mary Anne Snyder. We would like to acknowledge the staff of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission, Katie Mason, Kristina Mueller, and Sheryl Shushan, for their support and counsel. Finally, we are grateful to the parents and caregivers from Colorado Springs, Denver, Eagle, and Longmont that shared their experiences about what it is like to parent or care for a young child in Colorado.

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Appendices

These documents can be found online at www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org

- I. Early Childhood Colorado Framework
- II. Colorado Source Materials
 - a. Elementive Marketing Solutions Report - "Awareness Campaigns-Colorado Environmental Scan"
 - b. Sector Brands Report - "Communications Strategy Recommendations to Support a Statewide Early Childhood Public Awareness and Engagement Effort"
 - c. Mapping Survey of Communications Efforts –
 - Data Dashboards
 - <https://public.tableau.com/profile/shift.research.lab#!/vizhome/ECCC719/Story>
 - Additional Survey Charts and Narratives
 - d. The Idea Marketing - Findings from the Parent and Caregiver Focus Groups
- III. Early Childhood Communication Collaborative Steering Committee
- IV. Early Childhood Communication Collaborative Advisory Partners

all children are healthy, thriving and valued

**Program Quality and Alignment
Committee Update to ECLC:
*Transforming Colorado's Early
Childhood Workforce***

September 8, 2016



Colorado's Journey: Strengthening Our Early Childhood Workforce

1996 -2006: Core Knowledge & Standards, Common Course Numbering, Degree Focused Credential

2007 – 2010: Governor Ritter's P-20 Council & P-3 Task Force, NAEYC Accreditation for Community College Early Childhood Programs

2010 -2012: ECLC & Colorado's Early Learning Plan, Colorado's EC Competencies, Early Learning Dev. Guidelines , Early Childhood BA Degrees

2012 -2016: Early Childhood Professional Development Advisory, Race to the Top, Colorado Shines, Prof. Dev. Information System, Credential 2.0



Colorado's Early Learning Professional Development System Plan

Goal 1	Adopt performance-based competencies	Goal 5	Data collection and analysis of early learning professionals
Goal 2	Enhance recruitment and retention	Goal 6	Create accountability mechanisms
Goal 3	Ongoing career and skill development	Goal 7	Early Childhood Leadership Commission oversight
Goal 4	Finance through public and existing funds	Guiding principles: Accountable, Innovative, Accessible, Inclusive, Aligned, Well-financed and Collaborative	

Building Colorado's Great EC Workforce: Key Elements of the RTT Early Learning Challenge Fund – *Policy to Practice*

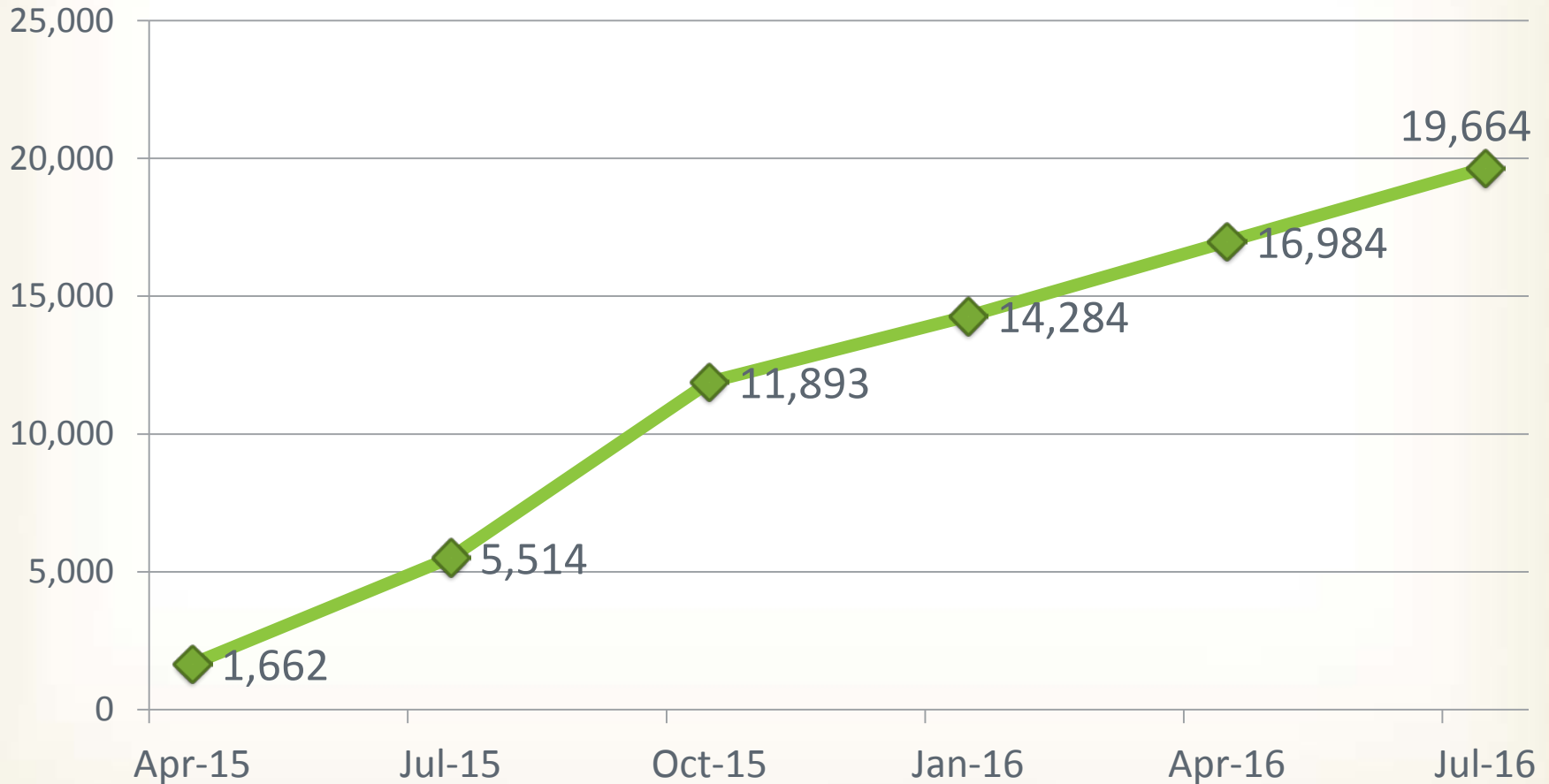
Early Learning Competencies Framework and Credential 2.0

Professional Development Information System

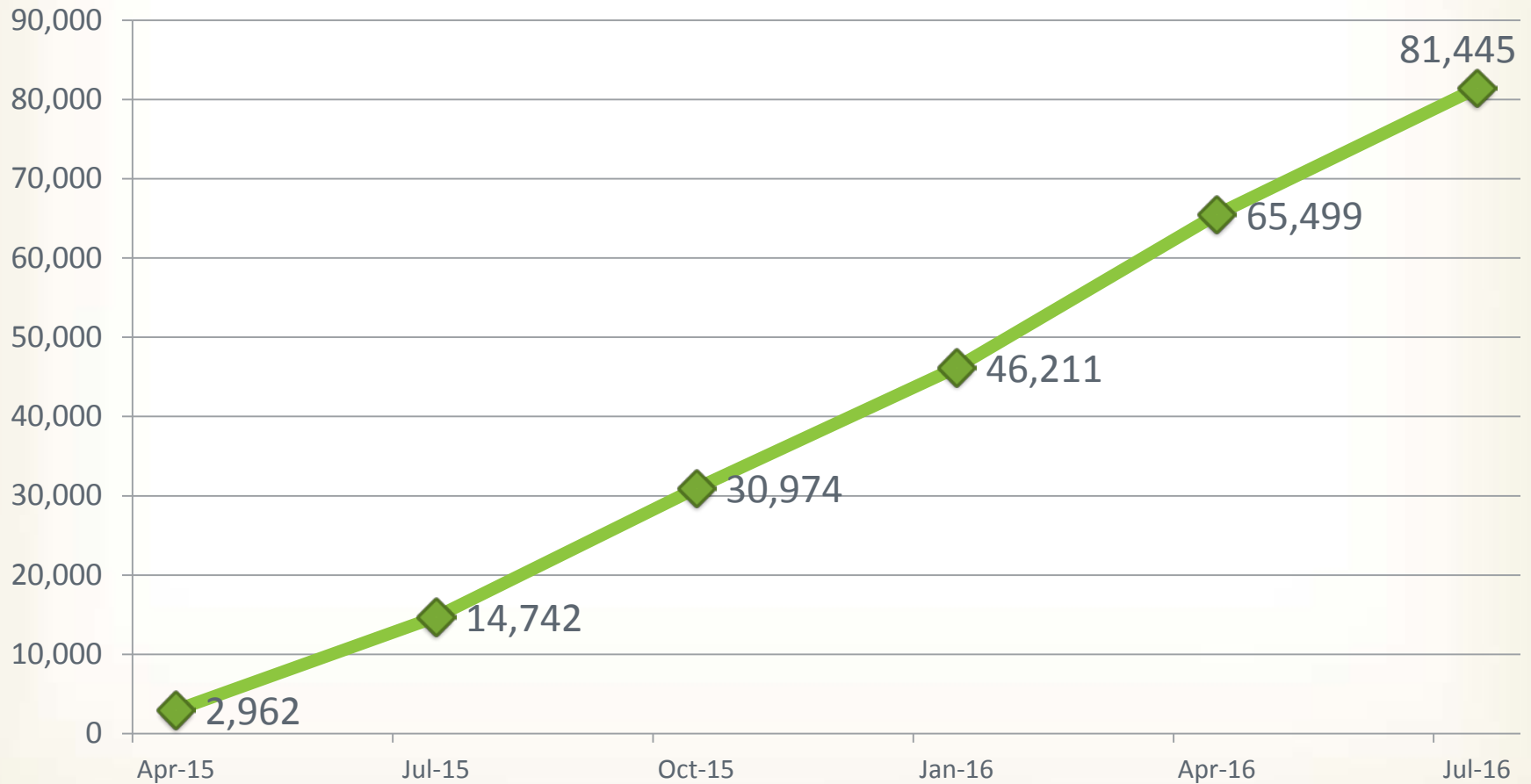
Scholarships & Incentives

Statewide Coaching and TA Network

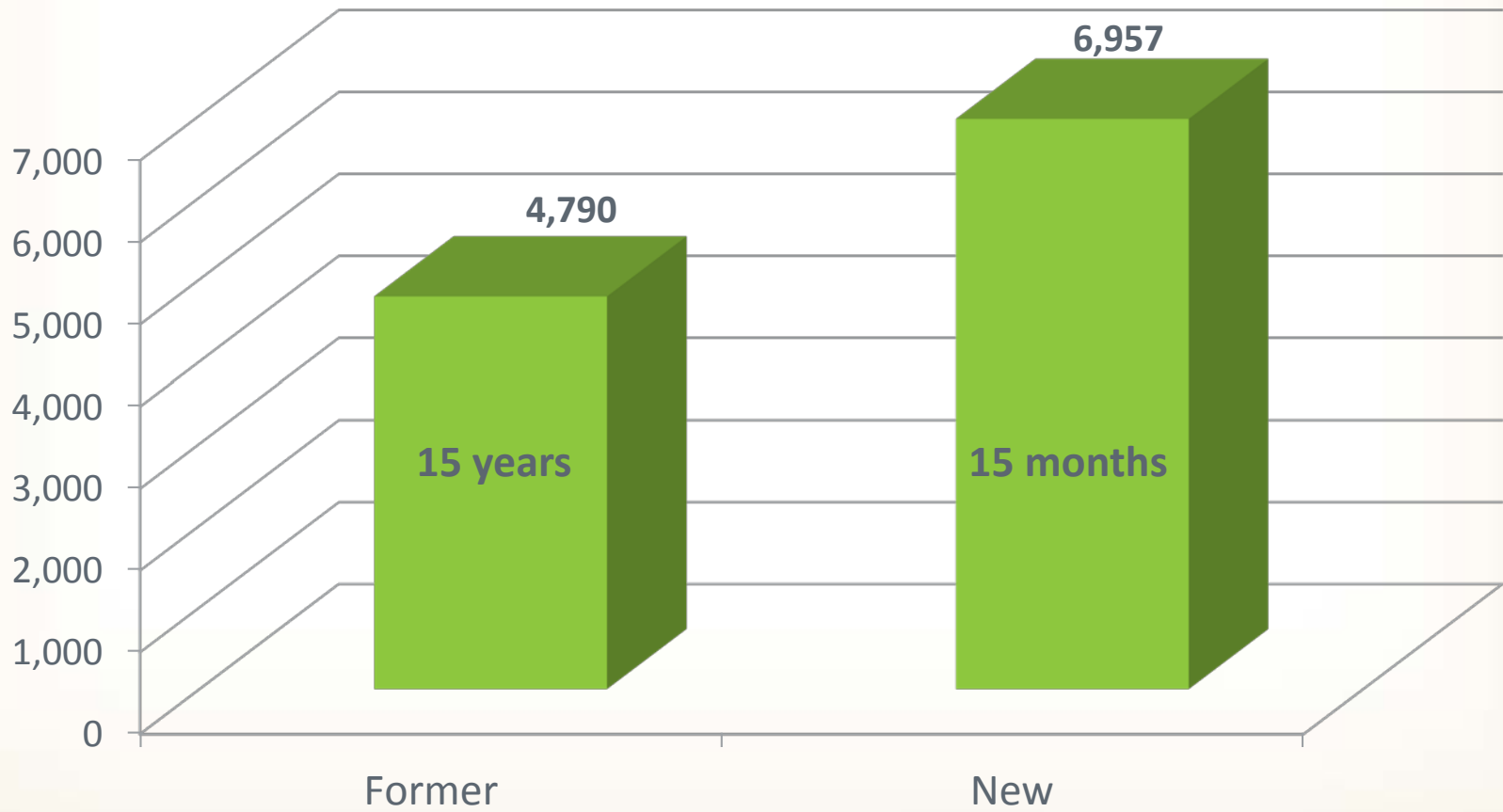
PDIS User Accounts Created



PDIS Online Self-Paced Course Completions



The NEW Early Childhood Professional Credential



Colorado's Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce Project

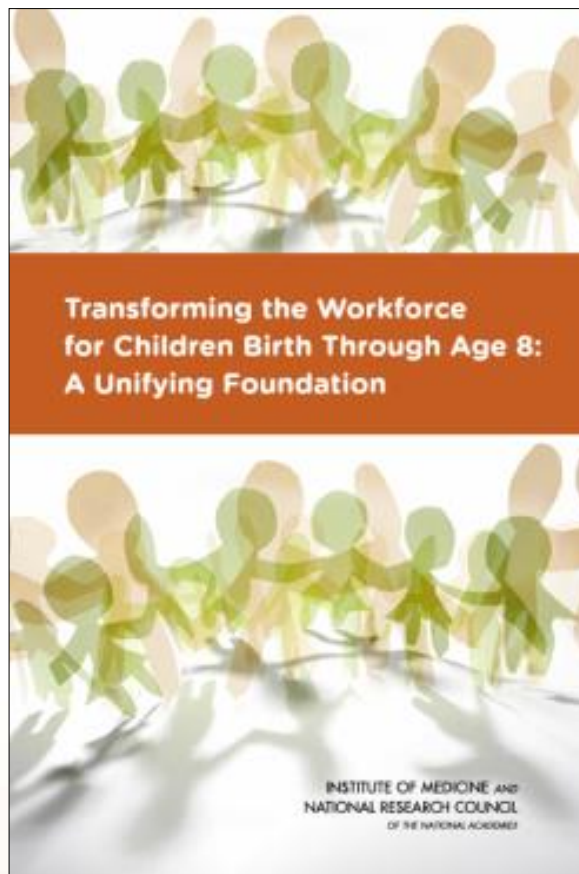
Investigate:
Workforce, EC
Economics &
Policies

New Early
Childhood PD
System Plan

Innovate:
Compensation,
Recruiting &
Retention

Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation

[www/iom.edu/Birthtoeight](http://www.iom.edu/Birthtoeight)



IOM (Institute of Medicine) and NRC (National Research Council). 2015. *Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.



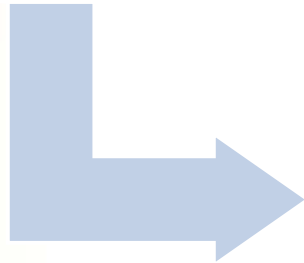
National Academy of Medicine Opportunity

- **Cohort 1: California, Washington, Illinois, Virginia, Washington D.C./Maryland/Northern Virginia**
- **Cohort 2: Colorado, Nebraska and Minnesota; Missouri in process**
- **Convening 30 – 35 national organizations**
- **Technical Assistance framed by 13 recommendations**
- **Key outcome for Colorado: new Early Childhood Professional Development Plan**
- **Inform pilots in Compensation, Recruitment and Retention**

Roles/Connections

Early Childhood
Leadership
Commission

- Seats ECPD Advisory
- Endorses Plan



Program Quality &
Alignment
Committee

- Oversight of ECPD Advisory
- Provides connection to ECLC



Early Childhood
Professional
Development
Advisory

- 35 Members
- Cohort provides updates & guides plan development



Relationship of Cohort to ECPD Advisory



Highlights from i2I Cohort Meeting

- **Defining Colorado's Early Childhood Workforce**
- **Engaging Early Childhood Professionals and Partners**
- **New Voices: Families, Workforce Investment, Business Leaders, Health Professionals**
- **Creating draft goals**
- **Establishing working teams**

Vision as a Verb

Colorado's P-3 professional development system ensures positive outcomes for young children and their families by recruiting, preparing and supporting highly effective, caring and diverse early learning professionals. The system is accountable, innovative, accessible, inclusive, aligned, well-financed and collaborative.

Discussion Notes: Leading Early Childhood Workforce Issues in Colorado

Early Childhood Leadership Commission Conversation: 9/8/2016

Let's start with the good news:

We're very focused on increasing quality:

The good news is that Colorado is increasing the quality of many early childhood centers and family homes. One of the key measures in Colorado Shines QRIS is the area of Workforce Qualifications. Scores in this area are based on Colorado's Early Childhood Credential, completion of a Self-Assessment based on EC Competencies and having a current EC PD Plan.

Our ECPD system is very connected: our competencies and credentials are imbedded in CDHS child care licensing and CDE educator licensing, our 2 and 4 year higher education programs and faculty work together, we have a statewide coaching network and a state of the art Professional Development Information system. The PDIS supports all types of EC professionals – community center staff, family home professionals, public school professionals through Grade 3, coaches, trainers, and FFN.

Recent scholarship investments have strengthened degree completion and EC program enrollment at both 2 and 4 year higher education programs, including alternative teacher preparation. RTT investments included funding TEACH (\$695K); Community Colleges (\$450K with requirements for a match); EC Special Education tuition and loan repayment (\$150K); BA & Alternative Teacher Preparation (\$220K) and Inclusion Credential (100K).

Focus areas:

Compensation, recruitment and retention: All the increased focus on quality, our EC professionals are engaging, feeling encouraged by this increased attention and focus. The recent Transforming the Workforce report recommends that all lead teachers have a BA in ECE.

Adults working in child care centers are paid an average of \$9.77 per hour. Although research shows that the expertise required to facilitate development and learning in the youngest children is comparable to that to teach school-aged children – the wage gap is tremendous. Elementary teacher are paid nearly three times as much – averaging \$26.39 per hour.

Currently, a BA degree in ECE occupies the dubious distinction of the college major with the lowest projected lifetime earnings

Some sectors of our EC workforce – Asst. Teachers and Teachers in community sites, family homes and some public schools are struggling economically. Lesser known facts about our EC industry (Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016)

- Nationally, almost \$1.5B of federal public support programs subsidize our EC workforce
- 46% of the childcare workforce is enrolled in one of four public support programs: Earned Income Tax Credit, Medicaid/CHIP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Nearly 2/3 of these EC professionals are employed full-time
- 1 in 10 had a BA
- 25% were single parent households
- 33% were married with children

1.5 Billion; we're working on identifying these subsidy supports in Colorado

Turnover/Retention:

- Typical industry rates are 25%; while difficult to track; estimates are at the 35% level and over 50% in some settings
- Costs to site per instance of turnover is 5K for recruiting and retraining; the costs are much higher if settings must close classrooms
- At 30% turnover, what's the impact on our quality investments? Hidden costs – turnover and repeated professional development
- Uncalculated costs to children and families – consequences of unstable and poor-quality

Recruitment:

- Need for greater diversity in our workforce
- Grow your own strategies
- EC Workforce Pipeline – new strategies
- Focused recruitment program with high school students combined with concurrent enrollment
- Scholarships are one strategy with the reality that once an EC professional attains a degree, the individual typically moves from a community site to a public school opportunity
- Alternate Teacher Preparation programs; stackable credits, credit through evaluation (credit for prior learning)
- Establish partnerships as an industry sector with local and state Workforce Boards

Compensation is critical – and workforce environment plays a key role in retention: We can support retention by ensuring the following work environment areas are provided:

Teaching Supports - Curriculum and Child Assessment, Materials, Support Services for Children and Families, Staffing

Learning Community - Professional Development Opportunities, Applying Learning

Job Crafting - Making Decisions in Your Classroom, Teamwork, Input into Your Workplace

Adult Well-Being - Economic Well-Being, Wellness Supports, Quality of Work Life

Program Leadership – Effective Supervisors and Leaders

Other leading issues:

- **Alignment and streamlining of credentials and competencies:** I call it sense-making for professional pathways. What's next for us – building specialized credentials from the basic 1-6 credential, reciprocity with CDE Educator Licensing, beginning the discussion about Educator Licensing bands (currently 0-8; would overlapping make sense; has to allow for flexibility for rural districts). K-3 teachers need knowledge and expertise in child growth and development, teaching practices, observation and assessment, etc.
- **Increased attention to supports for leadership roles in EC:** This includes Directors and Principals. The focus with principals can be rolling out courses based on the NAESP competencies. Current work includes p-3 Cadres at CDE, 0-8 Roadmap at DPS, BVSD has launched principal academies, and Buell/CDE P-3 track at Colorado Association for School Executives – there will continue to be more growth in the p-3 space. ESSA at the state and local level provide opportunities to increase discussion and action.
- **Professional Development Information System:** Continued development of new online courses and accelerated infusion of current high-quality content. Supporting local delivery of “flipped” face to face learning experiences: content through PDIS and high-value face to face used to reinforce and model application of content, support reflective practice and develop professional learning communities and networks.
- **Accelerating credit by evaluation and stackable degrees:** The EC field and our workforce stand to gain a faster pathway to degrees by working together with our 2 and 4 year higher education institutions to create programs that demonstrate competency and result in higher education credit.
- **Continuation of Colorado's Coaching Network:** Key to Colorado Shines QRIS, continuing to increase and sustain coaching is critical. The research showing the impact of how new learning becomes part of teaching practice when coaching is provided continues to grow. Are their new models to consider? How can sites increase their internal coaching capacity?
- **Funding for scholarships:** The majority of EC Professionals qualify for Pell grants. Are we always fully utilizing these \$ first? How can Colorado create a matching funding source for scholarships in EC?

Early Childhood Mental Health Update

Jordana Ash, LCSW, IMH-E

Early Childhood Mental Health Director

Office of Early Childhood

Early Childhood Mental Health Strategic Plan

- Convened an ECMH Steering Committee to guide direction of the work, priorities, and establish a body to be accountable to
 - Meeting 3 times in 2016 -hope to continue into future years
 - Yr. 1 Priorities identified by Committee: develop an ECMH budget framework, Crosswalk IMH work with other competency frameworks, continue to stay connected to SIM/ Cohort 1 regarding the pediatric focus and needs in integrated care, create an annual report of progress
- CO applied for and was selected as one of 10 states to participate in national convening focused on IECMH financing for assessment and treatment.
 - 5 member state team including ECMH Director, Medicaid Director, CDPHE rep, clinical provider, and funder from the Piton Foundation

Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists- Mental Health Consultation in CO

- 28 of 34 positions contracted; RFP out now for remaining 6.
- Lots of enthusiasm about having more capacity
- Cutting edge of ECMH consultation measurement with a newly revised version of the Preschool MH Climate Scale
- Database continues to be refined but all are using, including a number of community consultants
- Using Project LAUNCH carryover funds to fast track work on the Colorado consultation system including theory of change, standardized onboarding/orientation plan, brochures, and training modules; available to all.
 - Developing a suspension/expulsion study for early care & learning settings, which will include a provider and parent component

Colorado Project LAUNCH (COPL)

- Will enter year 3 on 10/1/16-eye towards systems changes for year 3 and beyond
- Services have been implemented in So. Adams County, pilot community, this year; data still emerging
- Charter development with TA from feds through our resource contact at Zero To Three
- Highlight: Family Engagement strategy really robust: community cafes, parenting classes in English and Spanish, 8 families being supported to go to Strengthening Families conference

Overview of FFN in Colorado Presented to the ECLC

Diana Romero Campbell
Mile High United Way

September 8, 2016



Mile High United Way

Colorado FFN Learning Community

Mission: We are a collective voice ensuring that children in FFN care are thriving

Goals:

- Learn what works and make it happen
- Reach out and engage community
- Serve as a hub to the FFN Community



School Readiness Describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in & benefit from learning experiences... enhanced when schools, families, & comm. service providers work collaboratively..

School Readiness for All Report

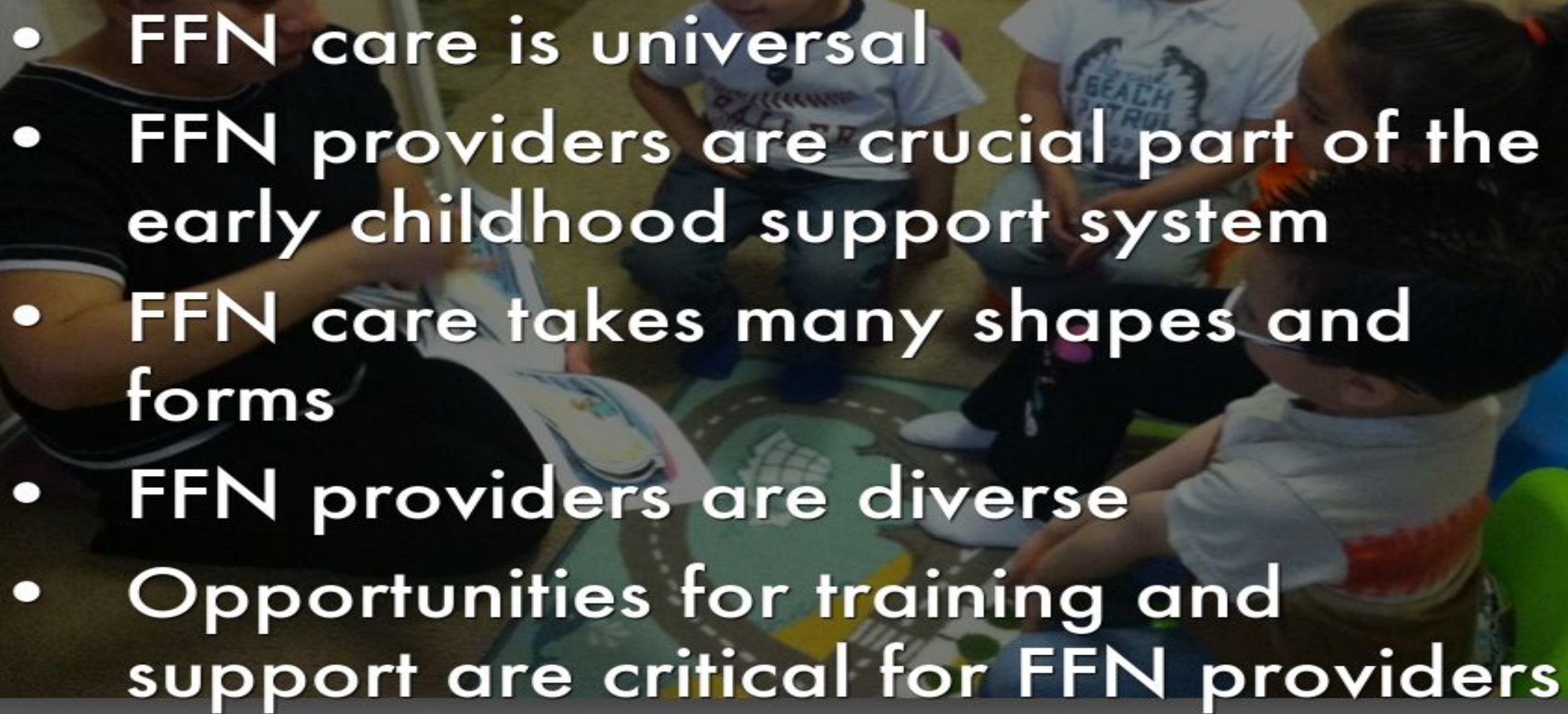
- March 2013- report completed that provided an overview of FFN in Colorado.
- 8 community focus groups in Delta, Pueblo, Cortez, Yuma, Greeley, Arapahoe and Denver County.
- Initial snapshot of the FFN landscape in Colorado based on an intentional effort to uncover, talk to, and understand the caregivers whose work often goes unacknowledged in national, state, and local discussions about quality in child care.

What is FFN care?

...Refers to care of children provided by the network of relatives, friends and neighbors of parents who may be working or in other activities. The care is for extended time, weekly, on a regular basis and can be used in combination with other forms of child care.



What do we know...

- FFN care is universal
 - FFN providers are crucial part of the early childhood support system
 - FFN care takes many shapes and forms
 - FFN providers are diverse
 - Opportunities for training and support are critical for FFN providers
- 
- A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a black shirt, is sitting on the floor in a playroom, reading a book to three young children. The children are sitting around her, looking at the book. The room is filled with colorful toys and furniture, including a yellow table and a blue chair. The background shows a wall with some decorations and a shelf with more toys.

What care setting are young children under 6 years old in when not with parents?

There are 406,000 Colorado children under age 6.*

166,000 children have at least one parent
Available for child care **/**

Est. 134,000 children under 6 yrs. old rely on FFN
care*

There are 106,000 slots in licensed
child care facilities**/**

Parents

Family
Caregivers

Friend/Neighbor
Caregivers

Exempt
Caregiver

Licensed Family/Home
Caregiver
Small Home Licensed
Large Home License

Licensed
Small Child
Care Center

Licensed
Large Child
Care Center

Variation of FFN/informal care settings

Nuances of informal care:

- Compensation (paid, unpaid, barter)
- How FFN caregivers view themselves
- Nannies
- Motivation/Community responsibility
- Ages and # of children
- Relate to state goals and objectives
- Quality and access issue for parents
- Time of care needed (evening/weekend)

Full time care 40 hrs+

Part time care

Situational/Sporadic care



With every available child care seat filled
There still is not capacity for every child under the age of six

Strategies for Action

- Connect and Empower Families
- Build Community Capacity
- Implement Quality Standards
- Make Data Informed Decisions
- Develop and Retain the Workforce
- Support Consumer Affordability
- Advance Sustainable Business Practices
- Encourage Public-Private Approaches
- Pursue Continuous Quality Improvement
- Share Coordinated Services
- Promote and Share Knowledge

Fundamentals

- Strong Partnerships
- Sufficient Investments
- Sound Policy
- Robust Public Engagement
- Shared Accountability
- Effective Leadership
- Relevant Education Opportunities

Outcomes ► access, quality and equity

 Family Support & Education
  Health & Well-Being
  Learning & Development

ACCESS

- Family engagement and leadership opportunities exist within programs, schools and communities
- Services and supports promote the well-being and resiliency of parents and caregivers
- Family-friendly policies and practices exist in the workplace
- Comprehensive health coverage and services are consistently utilized by pregnant women and children
- Integrated and preventive maternal and child physical, behavioral and oral health services are available
- All settings promote mental health and well-being through early identification, consultation and treatment
- Education, coaching and ongoing training exist for caregivers, teachers and other professionals
- Learning experiences and environments are high quality, developmentally appropriate and affordable

QUALITY

- Family knowledge and capacity support children's healthy development and learning
- Families advocate for high-quality comprehensive services and supports that lead to better success
- All health care providers, including mental health, deliver coordinated, family-focused care
- Settings and practices promote strong relationships, social and emotional development, appropriate nutrition and physical activity
- Formal and informal care environments and education practices reach the highest levels of quality
- Adults understand and support children's learning and development, including social and emotional
- All settings provide effective transitions across and within programs, schools and systems

EQUITY

- Education, employment, housing, financial and legal supports contribute to family economic security
- Families, including those with high needs, experience timely and coordinated services and supports
- Families have the ability to plan the number and timing of their children
- All environments are safe, free of toxins, have affordable foods and offer physical activity
- Children with special health, behavioral or developmental needs receive individualized services and supports
- All children are ready for school and achieving by 3rd grade regardless of ability, race, place, income, language and culture
- Children, including those with high needs, receive timely comprehensive and affordable academic services and transition supports

all children are valued, healthy and thriving



Results



CHILD

Young children reach their developmental potential and are ready to succeed in school and in life



ENVIRONMENTS

Environments that impact children are safe, stable and supportive



RELATIONSHIPS

Adults are knowledgeable, responsive and interact effectively with and on behalf of children

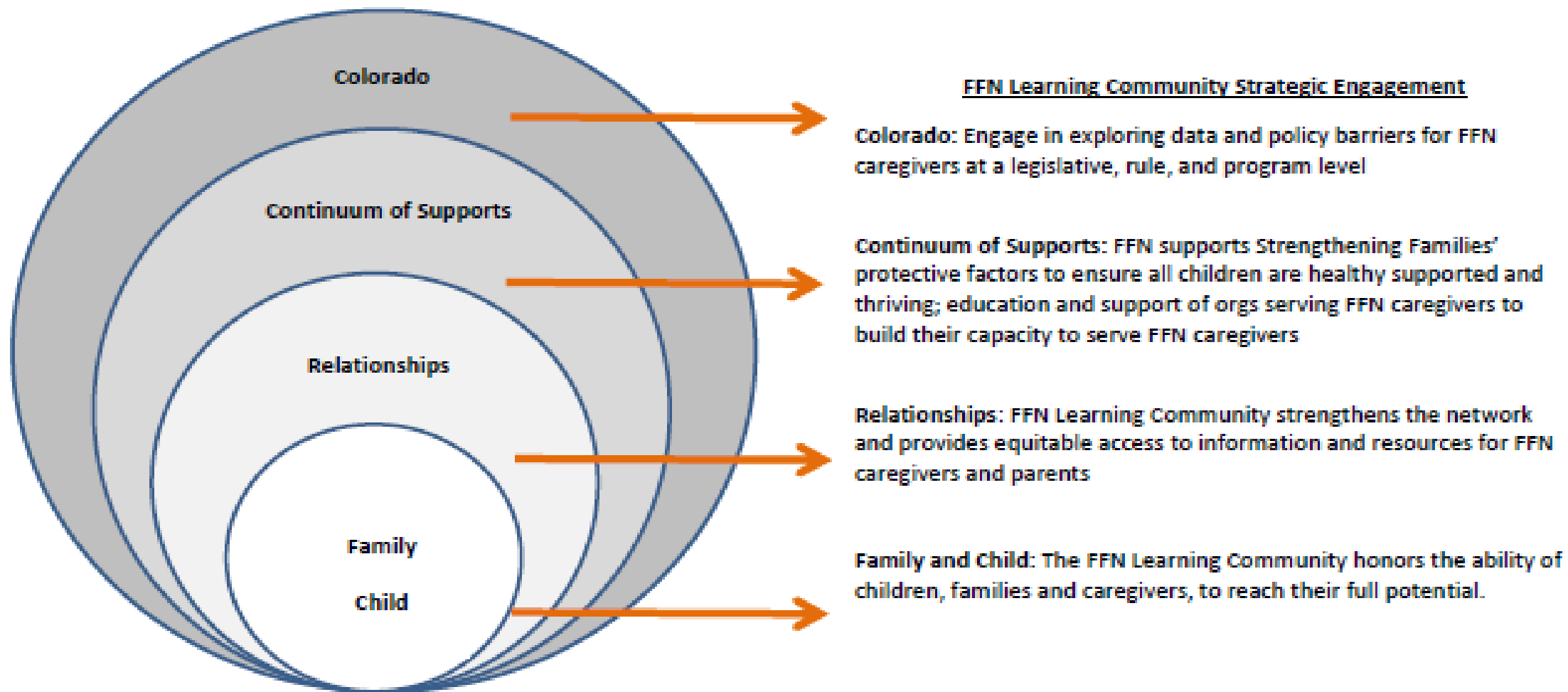


COLORADO

Localities and the state attain economic and social benefits by prioritizing children and families

Role of FFN in the Early Childhood Colorado Framework

Mission – The Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care Learning Community is a collective voice ensuring children in FFN care are thriving.



Role of FFN in the Early Childhood Colorado Framework

Access

- FFN Learning Community partners are providing education, coaching, and training for caregivers
- FFN Learning Community partners are sharing and improving environments to be high quality and developmentally appropriate
- FFN care is a preferred option for parents seeking affordability
- The FFN Learning Community raises awareness about gaps in services for families in need of full-time, evening, weekend or extended hour care for young children
- FFN Learning Community recognizes that children in all care settings need access to integrated and preventative physical, behavioral, and health services

Quality

- The FFN Learning Community is committed to increasing the knowledge and capacity of families and caregivers to support children's health, development and learning
- The FFN Learning Community acknowledges the need to partner with families and caregivers to advocate for high quality services in all care settings for children's success
- FFN caregivers require access to best practices to promote strong relationships, social and emotional development, proper nutrition and physical health. Many FFN Learning Community partners are working toward this goal.
- The FFN Learning Community honors the diverse care settings of FFN providers and Learning Community partners deliver tailored training to those care providers to increase quality
- The FFN Learning Community acknowledges the importance of naming FFN care in order to effectively reach out and provide intentional support to providers

Equity:

- It is a workforce development and retention issue for working families to have safe, stable, and enriching child care for their children. FFN care is often the preferred choice to meet those needs.
- FFN care is often the default care setting for children with high needs and is often provided as wrap-around care to a formal care setting.
- FFN Learning Community partners provide training to informal care providers on safety, health and physical activity.
- FFN care is a critical option for children under the age of 6, if the goal is for all children to be ready for school and achieving by third grade.

Recommendations

- Across the work in early childhood, we must avoid being unintentionally exclusive of FFN and need to be intentionally inclusive of all caregivers;
- Create a mechanism to provide opportunities and services to Family, Friend, and Neighbor care providers;
- Provide equity in access to early learning opportunities and resources centering on child development and positive outcomes for all children;
- Develop a strategic plan for effective FFN care that includes a communications and outreach campaign for FFN caregivers to ensure that they are familiar with available resources and services including public, nonprofit and private funds that may support their work;
- Ensure that all outreach to FFN providers is culturally responsive to the differences within the FFN community.
- Address the policy barriers facing FFN caregivers



Policy Context for the Early Childhood Leadership Commission

September 8, 2016



“The purpose of the commission is to **ensure and advance a comprehensive service delivery system** for pregnant women and children from birth to eight years of age using data to improve decision-making, alignment, and coordination among federally funded and state-funded services and programs for pregnant women and young children and their families. At a minimum, the comprehensive service delivery system for pregnant women and children shall must include services in the areas of **prenatal health, child health, child mental health, early learning, and family support and parent education**” (HB 13-1117).

2013

- HB 13-1117: Formal authority for the Office of Early Childhood and alignment of EC programs
- HB 13-1291: Infant and Toddler Quality and Access Grant Program
- 3,200 new preschool/full-day kindergarten slots

2014

- HB 14-1317: Reform of Colorado's Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)
- SB 14-003: CCCAP Cliff Effect Pilot Program
- HB 14-1072: Income tax credit for child care expenses for low-income families
- Budget: Quality improvement grants, licensing frequency, improved CCCAP rates
- 5,000 new preschool/FDK slots

2015

- HB 15-1317: Pay for Success (Social Impact Bonds) authorized
- Budget: improved CCCAP rates, FFN/child care micro grant and loan programs

2016

- HB 16-1227: Child care for teen parents & domestic violence survivors
- SB 16-212: 12-months continuous access for child care
- HB 16-1242: Doubling the number of state-funded early childhood mental health specialists
- Budget: 3rd consecutive year of increases in state-funding for child care subsidies, child care licensing, sustainability of Colorado Shines and PDIS, expansion of Nurse Family Partnership
- Regulations: Child Care Center Rules, Child Care Assistance Program Changes



Opportunities for policy action

Early Learning

- Pre-K expansion
- Child care tax credit strategies
- Early childhood suspensions & expulsions
- Workforce development
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) & K-12 Alignment

Health

- Behavioral health supports, screening & referral, and care coordination
- Early intervention
- Pregnancy-related depression

Family Support

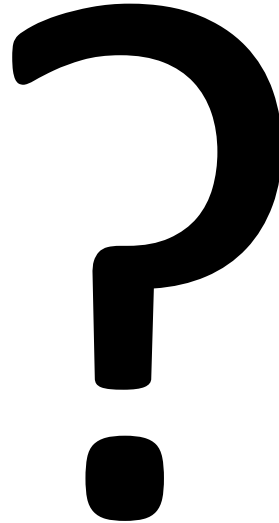
- Home visitation
- Paid Family Leave
- Two-generation strategies
- Informal caregivers

Cross Cutting

- Budget adequacy & flexibility
- Equity in outcomes



Where should the early childhood community direct our policy advocacy efforts in the coming years?



Funding in the Early Childhood Realm



Defining the Need – What Do We Hear?

- Start up funding needed for new and innovative centers
- Facility Funding
- Barriers to access hard on families and new providers
- More incentives/funding for infant and toddler care

Our Current Work in ECE Capitalization

- Early Care Map
- Business analysis of ECE workforce
- Facility financing models using PRI's
- Start up funding for innovative models
- Home based care models and new platforms
- Defining an affordable quality model



Opportunities to Improve ECE Funding



Incremental – Find \$ / Shift \$ to support:

- A fund to bridge start up operating costs for new centers
- Public/Private partnership to fund new facilities
- Policies aligning child care and pre-K funding mechanisms
- Higher infant-toddler reimbursement
- Pay for Success or other innovations to prove efficacy of new models or programs

Long Term – Create a Significant New Funding Stream to Capitalize the Sector

1. Agree on a concrete vision and roadmap to guide long term efforts
2. Use data to improve outcomes and build an evidence base to compel funding
3. Develop a broad based coalition of supporters around the vision and data
 - Funders, Providers, Business, School District, State + Counties
4. Ballot Initiative to Increase Funding
 - DPP as a model

