



Thursday, June 22, 2023

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Google Hangouts: <https://meet.google.com/xzy-mmob-gqs>

Or by phone: 732-639-1054 PIN: 201 587 780#

Meeting Materials:

www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org/eclc-meeting-information

AGENDA

Meeting Objectives:

- Approve the April 27, 2023 Meeting Minutes
 - Learn about recommendations for aligning CCCAP and UPK funding
 - Learn about CDEC's process for developing policy and legislative priorities
 - Provide feedback on the recommended changes to the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework*
 - Hear updates on current ECLC projects and consider strategies for alignment
 - Learn about early childhood efforts at state agencies and identify opportunities for collaboration
 - Hear comments from the Early Childhood Community
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| 9:00-9:10 am | Welcome and Introductions (Sue Renner, ECLC co-chair) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome back Dr. Angie Paccione!• ACTION: Approve the April 27, 2023 Meeting Minutes |
| 9:10-9:25 am | Colorado Department of Early Childhood Updates (Lisa Roy, Executive Director, CDEC) and Universal Preschool Program Updates (Dawn Odean, CDEC) |
| 9:25-9:50 am | Colorado Child Care Assistance Program / Universal Preschool Program Alignment (Jesse Burne and Dawn Odean) |
| 9:50-10:10 am | CDEC Policy and Legislative Updates (Grace Eckel, CDEC) |
| 10:10-11:00 am | <i>Early Childhood Colorado Framework</i> Refresh Review and Feedback (Leila Sammander and Nicole Sharpe, School Readiness Consulting) |
| 11:00-11:10 am | Break |
| 11:10-11:20 am | State Agency Updates Questions & Answer (Susan Steele, ECLC co-chair) |
| 11:20-11:30 am | Public Comment and Commissioner Updates (Susan Steele, ECLC co-chair) |

- 11:30-11:40 am Appreciation for Outgoing ECLC Member and Early Childhood Champions
- Dr. Katy Anthes, Outgoing Commissioner of Education
 - Michael Cooke, Outgoing Early Childhood Transition Director
 - Sondra Ranum, Outgoing Director, ECE Workforce Policy, CDHE
- 11:40-11:55 am ECLC Project Updates (Shannon Wilson, ECLC Administrator)
- 2022 ECLC Annual Report
 - ECLC Strategic Plan
 - Comprehensive Statewide Strategic Plan (formerly *Colorado Shines Brighter*)
 - Comprehensive Early Childhood Workforce Development Plan
- 11:55-12:00 pm Co-Chairs' Next Steps and Final Thoughts (Susan Steele, ECLC co-chair)
- 12:00 pm Adjourn

ECLC 2023 Meeting Schedule

- February 23, 2023
- April 27, 2023
- June 22, 2023
- August 24, 2023
- October 26, 2023
- December 21, 2023

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

The next ECLC Meeting will be held on August 24, 2023 from 9:00am to 12:00pm in person.

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



Early Childhood Leadership Commission April 27, 2023 ~ 9:30am - 12:30pm

MINUTES

Meeting Objectives:

- Approve the February 23, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Hear updates from CDEC and other state departments and consider ways to support current efforts
- Learn about CDEC's current data and technology efforts and provide feedback
- Provide feedback on current workforce development planning efforts
- Learn about the current status of the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* refresh
- Provide final feedback on ECLC Strategic Plan and determine next steps
- Hear comments from the Early Childhood Community

Attendees: Adeeb Khan, Happy Haynes, Floyd Cobb, Glenn Robinson, Heather Craiglow, Jacob Williams, Jasmin Ramirez, Jeanne McQueeney, Lisa Roy, Lucinda Burns, Maria Tarajano Rodman, Minna Castillo Cohen, Nicole Riehl, Pamela Harris, Rachel Huston, Robert Werthwein, Sondra Ranum, Sue Renner, Susan Steele, Tamara Hiler, Whitney LeBoeuf

Welcome and Introductions

Susan Steele called the meeting to order at 9:33. She asked for a motion to approve the February 23, 2023 meeting minutes. Pamela Harris motioned to approve the minutes as drafted, Tammi Hiler seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Colorado Department of Early Childhood Updates and Universal Preschool Updates

Dr. Lisa Roy announced that since the UPK matches were released last night, CDEC had over 11,000 families accept their match. Tammi Hiler shared her experience accepting her child's match and shared a video of Governor Polis calling families to tell them about their match. Dr. Roy explained that CDEC has been working with CDE to support families with children in special education, including communicating processes to ensuring students are matched to programs that can deliver special education services. Dr. Floyd Cobb added that CDE is working with Administrative Units and school districts to ensure that students receive the services they need. Next year and in round two, they hope to have a more streamlined process for these students.

A commissioner asked if it was communicated to families that they could renegotiate their IEP given that they may have been written before UPK existed, and commented that families with IEPs should be given the same level of choice that other families are given. Dr. Cobb responded that families can discuss the content of the IEP, but it is also statutorily required that the child be matched with a provider that can deliver their special education services. Because IEPs have federal requirements, matching with a provider that delivers special education services has been a priority. A commissioner asked about the plan for communicating with parents that they must accept their match and enroll with their provider. Dr. Roy responded that the letter stated those requirements and that parents will get frequent reminders. There will be special considerations for children with disabilities because they are guaranteed their match even if they have not accepted, so there will be additional communication. A commissioner asked if families are offered the option to discuss receiving services at a community provider or if they are funneled to a school district. Dr. Cobb responded that if a family is already receiving services at a community provider, they can continue to receive those services there. It is not required that they receive the services at a district, but rather that they are matched with a provider that will deliver the services in their IEP.

Because Dawn Odean was required to testify at the Legislature, UPK updates were moved to the end of the meeting.

CDEC Data and Technology Update /Comprehensive Analysis Project

Colleen Lynn, Director of Business, Innovation, Technology, and Security (BITS) at CDEC, shared updates on Data and Technology at CDEC. First, she provided an update on UPK. She knows there are a lot of questions about the data, but the speed at which the program was stood up has created challenges. The department released a minimal viable product to move the program forward this year and created the application in phases. Right now, CDEC has not created the reporting functions because they have not reached that phase; however, that work has started. CDEC hired a UPK data analyst, is working with OIT to create data dashboard capabilities, and is working with Bridgecare to build out the reporting systems.

Next, she provided an update on the transition to the new department. CDEC is partnering closely with OIT, but there are many new challenges since there has not been a new department for over 30 years. There is a goal to have all of the data and technology aspects, such as payroll, timekeeping, learning management, employee directory, etc., set up by June 30 and to finish the procurement and contracting system and HR system by September 30. BITS has hired several new positions and has several postings coming soon.

Next, she explained the current Comprehensive Analysis that CDEC is undertaking. There are three goals of this project: identity management, unified EC navigation portal, and an EC Data Trust. Another side goal is to help with blending and braiding funds. A commissioner asked what has changed to make it easier to connect different systems in the state because that has been very challenging in the past. Colleen responded that it will be created through user-centered design. They will work to build trust and excitement about what can be done with the data, and they will focus on the programs rather than just the technology. A commissioner shared that there could be a shared partnership between the data trust and the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC) technologies project. A commissioner asked if the EC navigation portal is the same thing that has been referred to as the unified application and why she isn't using that language. Colleen responded that they have realized that a single application for all services is not possible or desirable, so the goal is to build a high functioning portal that will help families realize what they qualify for, connect them to different applications, and transfer information that families have already entered across applications. A commissioner suggested that the language can be stronger and that there should be a focus on making this usable by families. Colleen responded that there is a focus on human-centered design with this project. Commissioners suggested that as the tool is created, there is a focus on making it more efficient; that they should create a product that fits the budget and timeframe but also outline an ideal state that can be advocated for; and that there be built-in ways for families to provide iterative feedback.

ECLC Strategic Plan Final Draft Review

Nicole Riehl, a member of the strategic plan working group, reviewed the process for creating the strategic plan. The plan started at the ECLC retreat in Fall 2022, and the themes from that retreat guided the work. Over the past four months, the group has reviewed several iterations of the plan and gathered feedback, which has led to the proposed final draft. The proposed final strategic plan is focused on the vision from the *EC Colorado Framework* and includes a 10-year strategic plan and a 2-3-year work plan. Happy Haynes explained that the strategic plan is focused on the ECLC's specific role and what actions the ECLC can take to influence systems. The plan is designed to be bold and to show how the ECLC will move goals forward.

Happy asked commissioners to share what excites them about the plan. Commissioners shared that they are excited that it is focused on systems and action and that it can be used to guide work. The plan reflects that the commission is changing and is flexible and will be adaptable as new needs arise, while being mindful of the north star. Commissioners suggested that there may need to be further articulation on what ECLC's advocacy role should be. Kristina responded that the 2-3-year plan has more specific ideas for advocacy actions. A commissioner suggested to add that the ECLC can learn about best practices from other states. A commissioner asked if we will revisit this plan every 2-3 years, and who will be the consistent champion of this work as commissioners move in and out of their roles. The work group responded that the 2-3 year work plan is intended to be iterative and that we will use the plan to develop agendas and guide the work of

subcommittees. Commissioner suggested: adding a goal around finding funding; adding that the ECLC will have a strong voice in the CDEC evaluation process; adding our partnership with the Early Childhood and School Readiness Legislative Commission for advocacy; and incorporating more ways to discuss mixed delivery. Kristina explained that the next steps with the plan are to develop a calendar for ECLC agenda items for the next 2-3 years, to review subcommittee and working group charters for alignment, and to review communication mechanisms for alignment.

Public Comment and Commissioner Updates

- Shaina Swain, The Butler Institute for Families at University of Denver, shared that as part of the Preschool Development Renewal Grant, they are conducting a survey of families in Colorado with children under the age of six. She shared flyers ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) and email/newsletter text ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) advertising the survey so that people can encourage the families they work with to take the survey.
- Sally Steinman, the Stanford Center on Early Childhood, shared that they are launching a professional development program for early childhood educators called FIND professional development. The program is being offered for free for the next two months. Interested educators and providers can register via an [interest form](#) and can find out more [on their website](#).
- Dawn Newby, Illuminate Colorado, shared updates from the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant. She shared that an annual report was submitted to the Health Resources and Services Administration who administers the grant. At the [CO-ECCS meeting](#) on May 23, the P-3 Policy Impact Center will present on the [Colorado Roadmap](#) if people want to learn more. Find more about the CO-ECCS work [here](#).
- Nicole Riehl shared that the renewal of the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit passed through committee yesterday. Part of the bill states that the Department of Revenue will be required to meet with the ECLC to consider recommendations oversight and also the incorporation of in-kind real-estate contributions. She also shared the newest iteration of the Employer Based Child Care Design Lab has been launched, and employers have been selected to participate.
- Kristen Lang shared the PDG [Annual Report](#) for the renewal grant. She will go over the report in more detail at the [Program Quality and Alignment subcommittee meeting](#) on May 12. She also shared that they have kicked off the needs assessment for the PDG grant renewal, and more will also be shared at the PQA meeting.
- Catherine Floyd shared that Trust for Learning just released a [Nature-Based Learning](#) brief, which features Commissioner Happy Haynes.
- Susan Steele shared that the review of CDEC Governance has already begun. Commissioners may be contacted about that. She hopes that ECLC members will share that we should give the process more time to see how it works.
- Floyd Cobb shared in the chat that the Early Childhood Career Navigation Team, part of the Educator Talent Unit at CDE, is helping individuals get into and thrive in a career in early childhood. One of the team's specific strategies is stewarding and paying for international transcript evaluation for those who obtained their formal education outside of the United States and want to become early educators. To start this process or talk with an Early Childhood Career Navigator, email EceCareerNav@cde.state.co.us.

Early Childhood Colorado Framework Refresh Update

Leila Sammarder, School Readiness Consulting (SRC), shared about the *Framework* Refresh process. The [findings from stakeholder feedback](#) were shared in advance. The process has included stakeholder engagement, work with a core planning team and steering committee, and ECLC Commissioner input. The stakeholder engagement process included a statewide survey offered in English and Spanish, listening sessions with various groups throughout the state, and several 1:1 interviews. The process reached nearly 600 people. Participants provided feedback on the *Framework* components and usability, and the steering committee helped contextualize the themes. The next step is to develop recommendations based on stakeholder feedback in conjunction with the core team, steering committee, and ECLC. At the June ECLC

meeting, SRC will present the recommendations for feedback, and at the August meeting, they will present the final *Framework* for consideration for ECLC endorsement. Commissioners asked how the *Framework* could be more usable since many survey respondents said they did not use it, and what definition of equity was used for the *Framework*. Leila responded that equity was one of the top things that came up in the engagement process, and that they are working to dig into that definition in developing the recommendations. Another commissioner suggested that SRC could use the definition of equity that has been used in the guiding principles.

CDEC Workforce Division Updates

Angela Ben-Zekry, ECE Recruitment and Retention Manager at CDEC, shared that the [Compensation and Benefits Task Force \(Spanish\)](#) Report was published in April 2023. The report will inform the state's new comprehensive workforce plan that will be completed and considered for endorsement by the ECLC later this year. The task force's charge was to develop goals for compensation for the EC workforce in Colorado and to consider funding sources. The report includes a set of salary scales for different positions based on credentials. The scales are meant to be pay floors and don't include increases based on years in each role. The report also includes adjustments based on cost of living in different regions of the state as well as recommendations on benefits including stipends, both universal and based on areas of need, health care, paid time off, and retirement. Finally, the report includes funding considerations. There are fact sheets for [providers \(Spanish\)](#), [supporters \(Spanish\)](#), and [policymakers \(Spanish\)](#). The next steps for the task force include a benefits facilitation solicitation to discuss improved tax credits and other solutions, teacher outreach and public services announcements, the creation of a Family Child Care Compensation Pilot to test some of the recommendations, and an increased request for CCDF funds for FY 2024. CDEC is also pursuing the Early Educator Investment Collaborative Grant to gather further data and increase collaboration; if awarded, the ECWD Subcommittee will be considered to serve as the advisory group for this grant. The workforce team will also do further work during the Preschool Development Grant needs assessment and strategic planning process happening this year.

A commissioner asked for an update on substitute pools. Angela responded that we have five agencies that would be eligible for the substitute fund. The legislation stalled due to the pandemic but now CDEC will be further testing the potential. A commissioner suggested creating a visual to show the difference between the suggested compensation and what families can pay for care in order to more clearly show the gaps and need for funding.

State Agency Updates

- Robert Werthwein shared updates from the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing. They are working to share information about Medicaid applications renewals. They have sent packets to members who need to renew. He shared links that families can use to [check their renewal status](#) and renew their application, as well as links to more information ([Health First Colorado](#), [HCPF COVID-19 Information](#), and [Public Health Emergency FAQs](#)). There has been confusion because people have been automatically renewed during the pandemic, so they are sharing information to encourage people to pay attention to their renewal packets.
- Sondra Ranum shared updates from the Colorado Department of Higher Education. Through the implementation of SB-22-192, Opportunities for Credential Attainment, the department is creating two stackable credential pathways in five different industries by 2025. Education is one of these industries, including early childhood. Industry leaders have been meeting to discuss the credentials, and early childhood is currently underrepresented in these discussions, especially from community-based providers. People interested in participating should contact sondra.ranum@state.co.us. ECEC Educator funding opportunities are being created in partnership with CDEC. So far, almost \$5 million have been distributed to students completing early childhood courses, and over \$7 million have been distributed as scholarships more broadly. The educator loan forgiveness program is about to open the next round of distribution. In partnership with the Early Educator Investment Collaborative Grant and in partnership with higher education institutions, CDHE is creating ways for early childhood workers

to earn credit for their work experience and to crosswalk professional development with coursework requirements.

- Minna Castillo Cohen shared updates from the Colorado Department of Human Services. The Colorado Fostering Success Voucher Program legislation was recently passed. It includes housing vouchers to help young people successfully transition out of the foster care system. Many of the people using the vouchers may have children who will benefit from this program. CDHS has also launched the Colorado Implementation Science Unit to look at the implementation prevention programs, many of which are in early childhood. They recently created a literature review of the connection between the prevention of child maltreatment and special education. Last, the deputy executive directors at CDHS are serving as interim directors after Director Barnes was designated to lead the Behavioral Health Administration on a temporary basis.
- Rachel Hutson shared updates from the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment. Representatives from CDPHE and CDEC are creating an inter-governmental agreement. The discussion is starting with the Prevention Services Division but will become a department-wide conversation. Work is continuing with tax credit outreach, and there have been many partnerships and successes. The Developmental Screening E-Referral pilot is continuing to move forward and includes a partnership with Children's Hospital Colorado. Baby & You (the newly branded Health eMoms survey) has launched. The NCH Needs Assessment is currently being planned to prepare for the 2025 Block Grant submission outlining future priorities. Further updates were provided as [a written update](#).

Continued UPK Updates and Q&A

Dawn Odean announced that HB-23-269, UPK Provider Bonus Bill, passed in the House. Families were matched with providers during the first round of matching. Over 25,000 families signed up, 22,000 received their first choice, and 12,500 families have already accepted their match. LCOs, providers, and other partners worked very hard to get to this moment, and CDEC is appreciative of families waiting patiently for the matches. Commissioners ask for updates on Round 2 of matching and how many providers are currently signed up. Dawn responded that families have two weeks to respond to round one, and providers can reach out to families who were matched with them during that time. Then, providers can update the system with the number of seats they have left. 5000 families have already signed up for Round 2. The application remains open for families to continuously sign up. There are over 1800 providers signed up. Commissioners asked how much money is available for families who need more than 15 hours. Dawn replied that, through the first round, CDEC knows the number of families who attested to qualifying for additional hours and will begin to process and verify qualifications. Then, CDEC will begin work with the finance team to see how the uptake and budget play out together, and will release that information soon.

Co-Chairs' Next Steps and Final Thoughts

Sue Renner thanked everyone for attending and participating. The next meeting will be held June 22nd, 2023.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:28pm.

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

Thank you for joining! We will begin shortly.

ECLC

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

June 22, 2023

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Google Meet



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

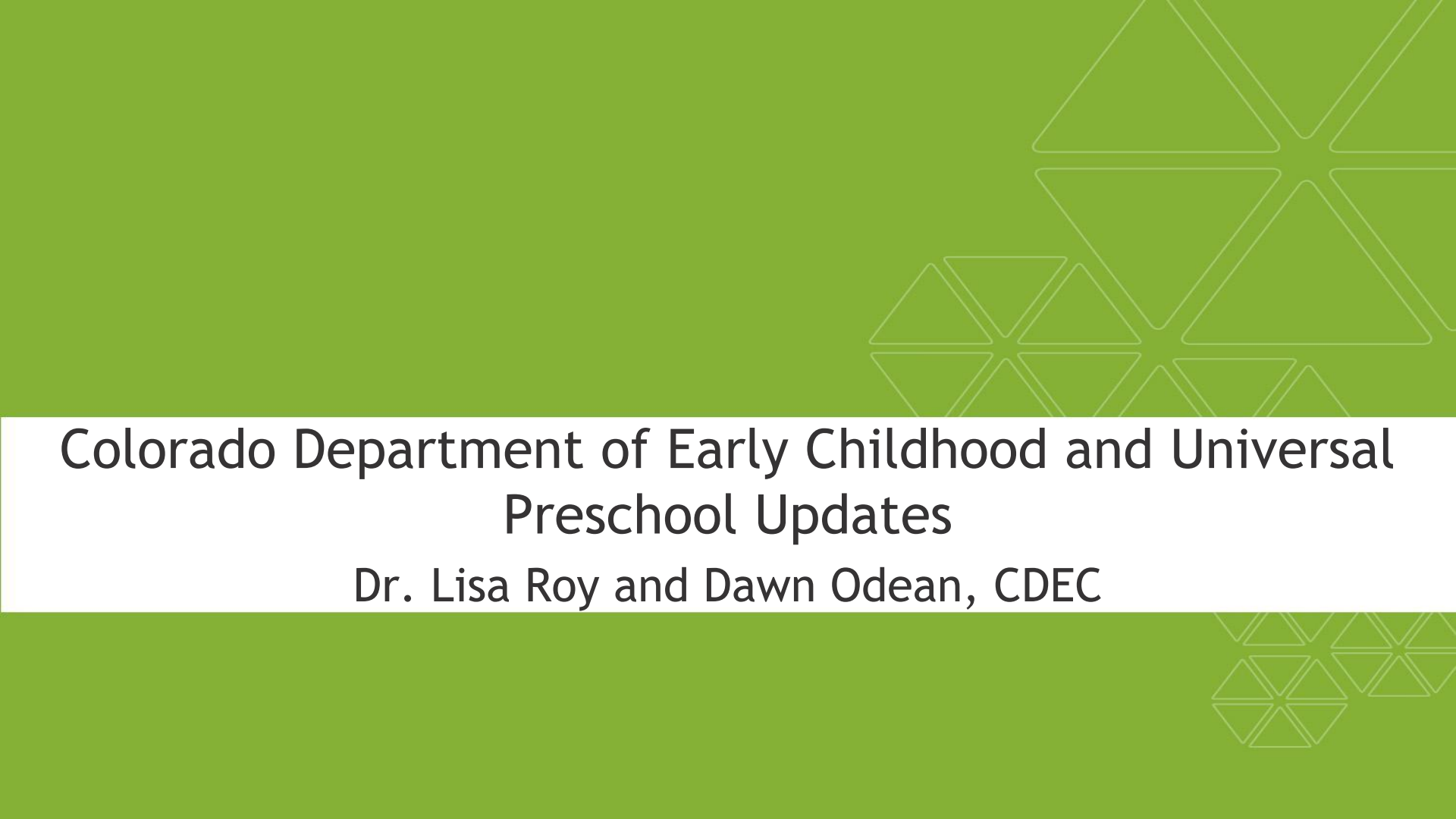


Welcome, Introductions & Approve Minutes

Sue Renner

Meeting Objectives

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Colorado Department of Early Childhood and Universal Preschool Updates

Dr. Lisa Roy and Dawn Odean, CDEC



CDEC's 5-Year Strategic Plan: 2023 - 2028

Effective May 30, 2023



COLORADO
Department of Early Childhood

CDEC Vision and Mission



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Department of Early Childhood

Our Vision

All Colorado children, families, and early childhood professionals are valued, healthy, and thriving.

Our Mission

To ensure the delivery of an inclusive, community-centered, data-driven, high quality, and equitable early childhood system that supports the care, education, and well-being of all Colorado's young children, their caregivers, and early childhood professionals in all settings.

Our Values

-  **Equity**
-  **Family & Community Focused**
-  **Excellence**
-  **Innovation**
-  **Strengths-Based**



Our CDEC Values



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Equity

We accept responsibility to champion equity and inclusivity and commit to providing culturally responsive programs, services, and resources that recognize and respect individual differences and circumstances, ensuring that families and caregivers, our community partners, and our employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential.



Family & Community Focused

We recognize that to support optimal growth and development in young children, we must collaborate with those who use our services, our community partners, and each other to cultivate a shared understanding that parents are the most important people in a child's life and ensure everything we do is responsive to diverse needs and circumstances.



Excellence

We foster an excellence mindset that we spread every aspect of our culture and operations, encouraging our community partners and employees to seek better ways to deliver comprehensive, well-coordinated services, improve processes, eliminate inefficiencies, and achieve the best outcomes.



Innovation

We encourage families and caregivers, our community partners, and each other to think outside the box, challenge the status quo, generate bold ideas, solve problems, and push the boundaries of what is possible by exploring new or alternative approaches, solutions, and technology.



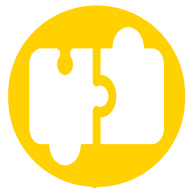
Strengths-Based

We embrace a strengths-based approach and recognize that including the diverse perspectives, experiences, and skills of families and caregivers, our community partners, and each other is necessary to support optimal growth and development in young children and to collectively achieve extraordinary outcomes and leave a legacy of positive change for future generations.

CDEC's Strategic Goals



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Goal 1

Expand Access to
Early Childhood
Services



Goal 5

Use Resources in
Ways that
Maximize Impact



Goal 2

Invest in Colorado's
Early Childhood
Workforce



Goal 6

Use Data to Inform
Decisions and Drive
Action



Goal 3

Strengthen
Families



Goal 7

Build and Nurture a
Workplace Culture
of Excellence

Goal 4

Build a Sustainable
Early Childhood
System

CDEC's Strategic Goals



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Goal 1: Expand Access to Early Childhood Services

Ensure all families, regardless of their background or circumstances, have equal access to Colorado's comprehensive system of early childhood services.



Goal 2: Invest in Colorado's Early Childhood Workforce

Recruit, support, and retain highly competent, caring, and diverse professionals across early childhood care and education settings.



Goal 3: Strengthen Families

Recognize the crucial role families and communities play in creating supportive and inclusive environments for early childhood development and offer knowledge and skill-building opportunities that support families around their goals of raising happy and healthy children despite the challenges that come their way.



Goal 4: Build a Sustainable Early Childhood System

Build, improve, and sustain an aligned and cohesive early childhood system with the resources, infrastructure, and policies supporting the long-term well-being of children, families, and communities.



Goal 5: Use Resources in Ways that Maximize Impact

Align resources with strategic objectives and establish clear accountability, monitoring, and evaluation processes to make informed decisions and optimize our potential to create meaningful change.



Goal 6: Use Data to Inform Decisions and Drive Action

Use data to inform and guide our decision-making processes, gain valuable insights, make informed choices that align with our values, goals, and objectives, and improve overall performance.



Goal 7: Build and Nurture a Workplace Culture of Excellence

Build a workplace culture that empowers employees to express opinions and ideas without fear of discrimination or retaliation, promotes collaboration, and instills a passion for delivering exceptional results.



Goal 1: Expand Access to Early Childhood Services

Ensure all families, regardless of their background or circumstances, have equal access to Colorado's comprehensive system of early childhood services.

1.1

Increase early childhood service availability, quality, and continuity.

Implement policies and initiatives that support increased availability and quality of early childhood services, increase service continuity, and encourage successful transitions across all early childhood settings.

1.2

Address disparities and barriers to access, quality, and choice.

Identify and address disparities and barriers to access, quality, and choice due to individual characteristics, where people live, or family resources.

1.3

Improve program quality and the quality of services.

Ensure all children and families have equitable access to high-quality early childhood programs and services so every child has an equal chance to succeed.

1.4

Make relevant information available to families so they can make informed and empowered choices.

Provide families with relevant information and resources so they feel empowered to make informed choices about the programs and services available to meet their needs.





Goal 2: Invest in Colorado's Early Childhood Workforce

Recruit, support, and retain highly competent, caring, and diverse professionals across early childhood care and education settings.

2.1

Promote efforts to ensure a thriving and healthy early childhood workforce.

Promote systemic and structural opportunities to increase funding for compensation, benefits, and other mechanisms to support our early childhood workforce's economic, social, and mental well-being.

2.2

Simplify career pathways to support a diverse and competent early childhood workforce.

Create aligned and accessible credential and qualification pathways to foster a comprehensive early childhood professional workforce that reflects the children and families of Colorado communities.

2.3

Support early childhood workforce professional learning and growth.

Provide training, mentoring, coaching, and consultative opportunities for the early childhood workforce to identify and build on their unique strengths and skills and to engage in reflective practices that support their ongoing growth and development.

2.4

Reinforce competencies across the early childhood workforce in providing inclusive and responsive care to all children and families.

Provide the early childhood workforce with initial training and professional learning opportunities to build competencies that advance culturally sustaining early childhood practices.





Goal 3: Strengthen Families

Recognize the crucial role families and communities play in creating supportive and inclusive environments for early childhood development and offer knowledge and skill-building opportunities that support families around their goals of raising happy and healthy children despite the challenges that come their way.

3.1

Implement culturally responsive practices.

Implement culturally responsive practices that acknowledge and respect families' diverse values, beliefs, and experiences.

3.2

Connect families to skill-building and educational programs that support parents with knowledge and skills to raise healthy, happy children.

Connect parents with culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate family support programs that offer skill-building and educational opportunities to enhance parenting skills, promote positive family interactions, and increase child development knowledge.

3.3

Connect children and families to essential services and supports.

Address systemic inequities by connecting children and families to essential services and supports that improve economic security and mobility, such as affordable healthcare, housing assistance, mental health support, child care, educational opportunities, and other basic needs.

3.4

Provide families with appropriate support and resources based on their identified needs.

Prioritize programs that have been proven effective for children, families, and communities who have experienced historic and systemic barriers.





Goal 4: Build a Sustainable Early Childhood System

Build, improve, and sustain an aligned and cohesive early childhood system with the resources, infrastructure, and policies supporting the long-term well-being of children, families, and communities.

4.1

Diversify partnerships to strengthen coordination and collaboration efforts.

Leverage the collective strengths and expertise of community-based partners, philanthropic organizations, government agencies, healthcare providers, families, providers, policymakers, and other key stakeholders to maximize the impact of shared resources and create sustainable change.

4.2

Advocate for inclusive policies that prioritize family and community well-being.

Develop and implement inclusive policies, procedures, and standards that address the needs of Colorado's families within their communities and support family well-being.

4.3

Drive innovation through collaboration.

Intentionally create space that encourages everyone, regardless of rank or title, to generate new ideas, challenge the status quo, and use creative problem-solving methods to solve critical early childhood challenges.



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Goal 5: Use Resources in Ways that Maximize Impact

Align resources with strategic objectives and establish clear accountability, monitoring, and evaluation processes to make informed decisions and optimize our potential to create meaningful change.

5.1

Consider diverse perspectives when prioritizing resources.

Actively seek input and feedback from stakeholders directly impacted by our work to ensure diverse perspectives are considered when determining ways to prioritize using existing resources in ways that address critical early childhood issues.

5.2

Align and allocate resources to drive positive child and family outcomes.

Allocate and align federal, state, and local resources in ways that drive positive child and family outcomes and equitably address the specific needs and challenges of underserved communities.

5.3

Manage resources effectively.

Develop systems and processes to ensure transparency, continuously evaluate the impact of resource allocation decisions, track the impact of resource allocation efforts, and report progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

5.4

Adapt and optimize resource allocation strategies.

Intentionally create opportunities for continuous improvement enabling us to refine and improve future resource allocation strategies based on emerging opportunities and changing circumstances.





Goal 6: Use Data to Inform Decisions and Drive Action

Use data to inform and guide our decision-making processes, gain valuable insights, make informed choices that align with our values, goals, and objectives, and improve overall performance.

6.1

Develop a framework to use data for decision-making.

Define the objectives and goals for using data to inform decisions, including establishing a common language, developing robust data governance practices to maintain data integrity and reliability, and actively seeking stakeholder input and feedback.

6.2

Build a system to collect and store relevant data.

Build an integrated early childhood data system to collect and store relevant data from diverse sources, ensuring data collection methods are inclusive and do not perpetuate biases or discriminatory practices. This involves collecting disaggregated data to identify disparities, seeking feedback from families with diverse backgrounds, and making necessary adjustments to ensure equitable outcomes.

6.3

Enhance data-sharing efforts.

Develop protocols and guidelines to ethically share data with relevant stakeholders to improve planning, increase alignment, ensure equitable practices, and strengthen decision-making.

6.4

Teach people to use data effectively.

Provide decision-makers and employees training and skill development opportunities to build data literacy to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to interpret and utilize data effectively.

6.5

Embrace a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation.

Regularly review and refine the data-driven decision-making framework based on feedback, organizational needs, emerging data technologies, and industry best practices.





Goal 7: Build and Nurture a Workplace Culture of Excellence

Build a workplace culture that empowers employees to express opinions and ideas without fear of discrimination or retaliation, promotes collaboration, and instills a passion for delivering exceptional results.

7.1

Build an environment where employees feel valued and respected.

Foster an inclusive environment that intentionally acknowledges employees' efforts and achievements and allows employees to freely express their opinions, concerns, and suggestions without fear of retribution.

7.2

Ensure employees have what they need to do their job effectively.

Clarify roles and responsibilities, communicate expectations, prioritize establishing and maintaining effective and efficient processes, and provide employees with the necessary resources, training, and support to excel.

7.3

Invest in employee growth and development.

Invest in opportunities that allow employees at all levels to pursue professional development opportunities, acquire new knowledge and skills, and share their expertise.

7.4

Prioritize employee well-being and work-life balance.

Intentionally create policies, systems, and processes that support flexibility, promote physical and mental health, promote a sense of fulfillment and belonging, and help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance.





UPK FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

- UPK payments to providers begin with a start up payment in August
- Providers will verify enrollment for the program year in BridgeCare
- Payments will be made monthly starting in September with enrollment changes adjusted
- Any needed reconciliation will occur in January and May

UPK Colorado - continued

- We will let both families and providers know of allotted funding prior to the first payment
- UPK Colorado rates are first in
 - We are collaborating with the CCCAP team and work group to determine blending for year 1 as well as more fluid solutions for year 2
 - We are collaborating with the Head Start Collaboration Director on blending for head start





UPK Colorado Matching

- Round 3 June 19- July 5
- Round 4 July 14- August 2
- Next steps as program year begins

UPK Colorado Data (After Round 2)

- 27,457 families have accepted their provider matches
- 90.7 percent of children were matched to any of their chosen providers
- 78.6 percent of families were matched to their first choice
- \$164.7 million in savings



COLORADO
Department of Early Childhood





Colorado Child Care Assistance Program / Universal Preschool Program Alignment

Dawn Odean and Jesse Burne, CDEC

Blending Versus Stacking Definitions

Current federal definitions:

Blending: Blending refers to wrapping funds from two or more funding sources together to fund a specific part of a program or initiative. In blending, costs are not necessarily allocated and tracked by individual funding sources.

Stacking/Layering: When funds are stacked, two or more funding sources are coordinated to support the total cost of a service. Revenues are allocated and expenditures are tracked by different categories of funding sources. In stacking, cost-allocation methods are required to ensure that there is no duplicate funding of service costs and that each funding source is charged its fair share across the partners.



Stakeholder Engagement

Context:

- This is complicated and hard work and we're working with real time pressures - approaching with humility and urgency
- Multiple levels of policy to navigate: federal requirements, state statute and local administration policies
- Shared goal: successfully implementing the best policies we can to serve and support kids and families, with a commitment to continuous quality improvement

Deliverables:

- Create opportunities for collaborative discussions and joint problem solving with various stakeholders, including counties and community advocates
- Development of short and long term strategies to blend and stack CCCAP and UPK
- Informational Memo and slide deck for town halls - May
- Guidance toolkit distributed for county staff, providers, families - August
- Pursuit of long term solutions which can include rule or legislative strategies, along with budget requests.



CCCAP / UPK Alignment Working Group

Members

- Community Advocates (providers, foundations, businesses)
- County Directors / Subject Matter Experts (Counties - Douglas, Weld, Larimer, Denver, Eagle, La Plata)
- CDEC CCCAP and UPK team
- LCOs
- Additional guidance through federal teams and other state best practices

Timeline

- Bi-weekly meetings in March-September 2023
- Problem Identification and pathway for resolution
 - Change through guidance/ memos
 - Policy obstacles that might move through rule change
 - Updates in CCDF state plan for next cycle (6/30/2024, effective 10/1/2024)
 - Change through legislation



CCCAP & UPK Alignment Challenges

Per 26.5-4-111, there are multiple requirements of the interplay between CCCAP and UPK with the overall purpose of allowing families to leverage as many possible resources as they can, but in a manner that is not unduly burdensome to them. Most of the requirements laid out in statute are being met:

- Eligibility Redetermination → Children enrolled in both programs will have eligibility redeterminations occur in a manner that is consistent with both program's laws/requirements
- Collaboration in Determining Eligibility → CDEC is currently working to ensure both systems can communicate to eliminate bureaucratic inefficiencies for both families and the state
- Alignment on Targeted Populations → We are mapping out this process and how to ensure eligibility and authorization for both programs are aligned regarding targeted populations

Due to the mechanics and federal requirements surrounding CCCAP, “blending and braiding” of funds has some significant operational hurdles to overcome

- **Specifically, the timelines of how funds are disbursed in CCCAP vs. UPK jeopardizes the feasibility of having funds “be combined and coordinated”**



CCCAP and UPK Regulatory Misalignment



While UPK is a Colorado based and funded program, CCCAP utilizes federal resources. Naturally, this entails federal regulations and requirements too.

- The Code of Federal Regulation has numerous requirements of CCCAP operations as a program derived from federal funding, including ensuring timeliness of payment and stability of funding.

What this means effectively is:

- CCCAP payments must be made prospectively or within 21 days of a complete invoice for services rendered
- CCCAP payments need to be on a PT or FT basis and not smaller increments
- “Overpayments” in CCCAP are unacceptable

CCCAP Operational Payment Structure



- CCCAP parent co-payments are the first dollars paid towards CCCAP every month.
- Provider reimbursement rates vary by county, provider type, rate type.
- CCCAP pays based on daily reimbursement rates (not based on a weekly rate) for a full-time day or a part-time day depending on what care is authorized.
- We cannot adjust the amount of care authorized in the 12-month eligibility period unless requested by the parent based on the need for care.
- Providers are automatically paid weekly through CHATS. This meets federal timeliness requirements.
- Federally we are not supported in making a payment to a provider knowing there will be a overpayment that has to be recovered.

Short Term Tasks and Solutions

Short-Term (Over the next 12 months)

- Counties will continue to conduct business as usual by authorizing CCCAP child care based on the care needs of the child. There will be a transition period in which the two funding streams may be blended, resulting in child care providers receiving funds from both funding sources during the same time period.
- In an effort to work towards the stacking of funding streams the Department is in the process of:
 - Updating the CCCAP Application and Redetermination forms to:
 - Add a section to collect information on dually enrolled children which will provide counties information they may utilize when authorizing child care for CCCAP children.
 - Include the revised Authorization to Supply and Release Information in the actual CCCAP Application and Redetermination forms instead of having it as a separate form that needs to be signed. This change removes the need for multiple signatures by the applicant for counties to manage and ensures our ability to continue to share information with child care providers and between other public assistance programs.

The revised CCCAP Application and Redetermination forms will be issued to counties through an Operational Memo and made available in CHATS.



Prioritized Short Term Tasks



- The Department will create an initial report to match both programs that provides information on dually enrolled children to help:
 - Counties identify dually enrolled children in UPK and CCCAP to facilitate conversations with existing CCCAP families on the CCCAP care needs of the child and if changes to the child care authorization are needed.
 - LCOs facilitate conversations with CCCAP families and child care providers on care needs for dually enrolled children with the goal of adjusting CCCAP authorizations and stack UPK and CCCAP funds to the best of our ability.
- The Department will provide training and guidance materials to counties, LCO's and providers as determined necessary. A communications tool kit will be developed to help inform these stakeholders.

Prioritized Short Term Tasks Continued



- The Department will continue to look at additional reporting capabilities to provide more detailed reports on dually enrolled children and ways to automate data sharing between programs where possible.
- In partnership with the CCCAP/UPK Work Group, the Department will develop additional forms to gather information from dually enrolled children during a family's 12-month CCCAP eligibility period. Once finalized, this information will be included in an Operational Memo to provide guidance regarding the use of the form.

County CCCAP Budget Concerns

When funds are stacked, the two funding sources are coordinated to support the total cost of service but are not used during the same time period. Through this reimbursement model, revenues are allocated and expenditures are tracked by different categories of funding sources to ensure there is no duplicate funding of service costs and that *each funding source is charged its fair share across the partners.*

While the stacking of CCCAP and UPK funds is the long-term goal of the Department, in the short term, the funding streams will be blended and the Department will begin to implement changes to slowly begin to stack funding streams when possible.

For children dually enrolled in both CCCAP and UPK, the UPK rate of part time (minimum of 10 hours per week) and half day (minimum of 15 hours per week) is first in toward the total cost of service needed. If UPK funds are available, qualifying children may be awarded a full day rate (up to 30 hours per week). These additional hours are not guaranteed, rather pending qualification and pending fund availability. CDEC will monitor and report monthly, those children who are dually enrolled and at which rate by County.



County CCCAP Overpayment Concerns

While the stacking of CCCAP and UPK funds is the long-term goal of the Department, in the short term, the funding streams will be blended and the Department will begin to implement changes to slowly begin to stack funding streams when possible.

This will not create any provider overpayments due to the fact that these are two different funding streams, there are not any Federal or State Regulations prohibiting the blending of these funds and child care will continue to be authorized in accordance with the State CCCAP Code of Regulations based on the information available at the time of authorization.



Long Term Tasks and Solutions

Long-Term (Expected in 2024)

- Develop New Policies & Regulations
 - The Colorado Revised Statutes currently require CCCAP and UPK to align eligibility determinations to the extent possible. Both programs may revise the program rules to support this alignment.
 - Determine other possible policy and regulation changes needed.
- Utilize the work to develop an alternative methodology for setting CCCAP reimbursement rates and potentially establish a specific UPK/CCCAP rate for dually enrolled children. The scope of work related to alternative methodology CCCAP rates will be done with feedback from county leaders.



Prioritized Long Term Tasks



- Identify potential changes to payment practices for providers caring for dually enrolled children to align both programs such as payment based on enrollment.
- Implement New Technology
 - Both CCCAP and UPK systems must be able to support data sharing to continue to identify dually enrolled children as well as support any policy changes that are made in the future.
- Determine Long Term Funding Needs
 - Based on the policy and technology needs that are identified, the Department may need to seek additional funding to support changes such as key functionality integration between CHATS and Bridgecare.

Other Considerations

- Budget
- Administrative Burden
- County and LCO Input
- Fed Review
- Other Similar State Examples



Colorado Department of Early Childhood Policy and Legislative Updates

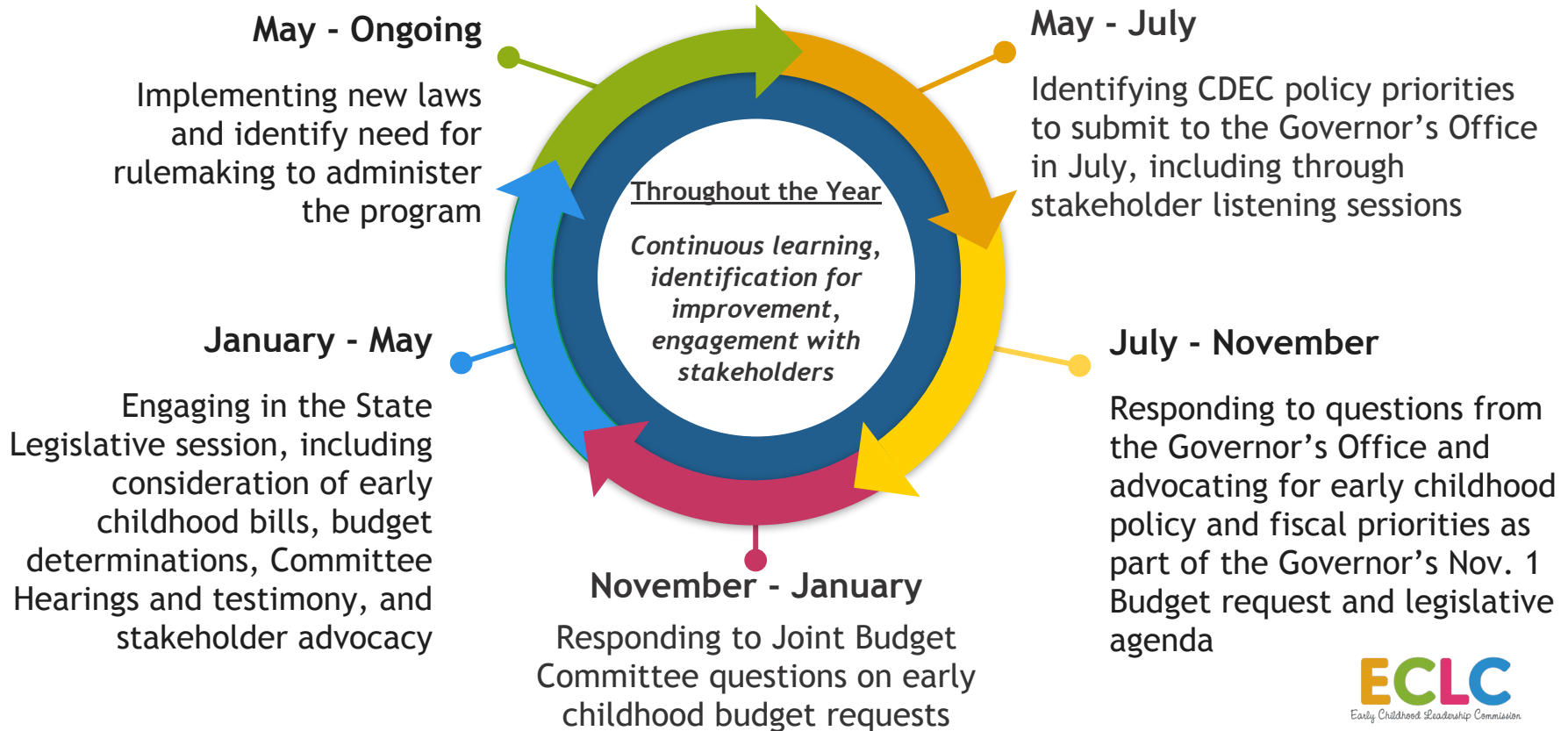
Grace Eckel, CDEC

About Us: Policy & Legislative Unit

The CDEC Policy and Legislative Unit is **responsible for advancing policy, legislative, and fiscal initiatives** – from analysis and development through implementation – to achieve the strategic Mission and Vision of the Department. Key duties include:

- Identify and develop strategic policy and legislative priorities
- Analyze legislation and track bills
- Articulate CDEC's position on proposed legislative or fiscal changes
- Summarize new legislation and create policy implementation work plans
- Develop and facilitate rulemaking and regulatory functions
- Engage with external stakeholders, partners, and advocates
- Provide initial legal and statutory compliance review
- Educate and inform staff on policy, legislative, and legal processes

CDEC Involvement in Legislative Process



CDEC Stakeholder Policy Themes

- As part of the FY 2024-25 Budget and Legislative planning process, CDEC staff and leadership met with **more than 100 stakeholders** with perspectives on programs and services across CDEC.
- There were **consistent themes** across several areas: Workforce, Infant-Toddler, Embedding Child Care in Affordable Housing, Data and Technology, Language Justice, and Universal Preschool.
- CDEC is currently developing budget and legislative concepts that are **informed by these listening sessions**, for submission to the Governor's Office in July.
- All budget concepts are **confidential until November 1, 2023**.

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Early Childhood Colorado Framework Refresh Review + Feedback

Leila Sammander and Nicole Sharpe, School Readiness Consulting

WELCOME!

EARLY CHILDHOOD COLORADO FRAMEWORK REFRESH

ECLC June 22 Meeting



EARLY CHILDHOOD CO FRAMEWORK REFRESH

ECLC

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

FACILITATE A STATEWIDE
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
PROCESS TO PROVIDE AN
**UPDATED EARLY CHILDHOOD
COLORADO FRAMEWORK**



GROUNDING IN THE FRAMEWORK

Early Childhood Colorado Framework A SHARED VISION

For more information visit earlychildhoodframework.org
ADOPTED JULY 2008 | UPDATED JULY 2015

Core Principles

The Early Childhood Colorado Framework is based on and guided by these principles:

- Whole child and family centered
- Prenatal through age eight
- Strengths based
- Culturally relevant and responsive
- Outcomes focused
- Informed by evidence based and promising practices
- Cross-sector collaboration

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

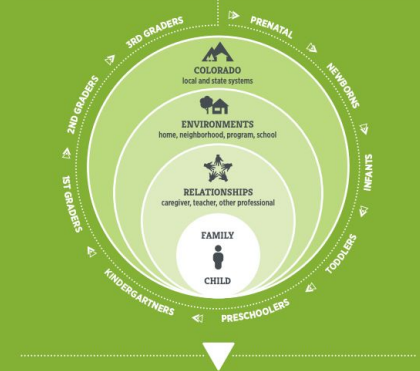
QUALITY

- 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

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

October 2022-September 2023

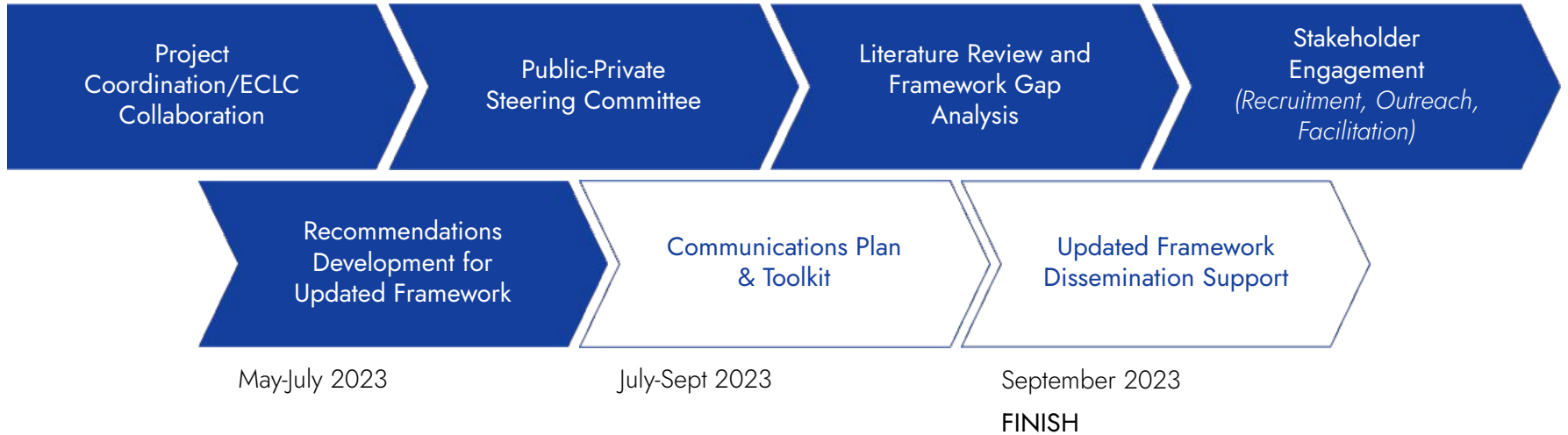
START

Oct 2022-Sept 2023

Through Sept 2023

Through April 2023

Jan-April 2023



OUTREACH AT-A-GLANCE

AS A RESULT OF SUPPORT FROM ECLC AND THE STEERING COMMITTEE...

602 PEOPLE

throughout the state provided their ideas, feedback and insights

340
COMPLETED THE
SURVEY

256
ATTENDED
LISTENING
SESSIONS

11
PARTICIPATED IN
1:1 CHATS

Count as of 5/21

CHECK OUT THE DETAILED DEMOGRAPHICS, STAKEHOLDER QUOTES, AND FULL ANALYSIS IN THE PRE-WORK!



A photograph of a family of three walking away from the camera on a dirt path. The mother is on the left, wearing a striped shirt and jeans. The father is on the right, wearing a dark shirt and jeans. A young child in a white dress is walking between them, holding their hands. The background shows a sunset over a field of trees and bushes, with a soft, golden glow. A semi-transparent dark rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text.

POTENTIAL SHIFTS AN UPDATED FRAMEWORK

CONSIDERATIONS

SHARING OUT RECOMMENDATIONS

AT THE FOREFRONT

- Equity lens
- Community voice and feedback
- Alignment to other foundational documents and state frameworks

WHAT WE HEARD

Ideas, feedback, and insights shared during stakeholder engagement efforts

WHAT WE LEARNED

Information from the literature review sharing evidence-based and emerging practices, as well as a scan of Colorado and other state frameworks

POTENTIAL SHIFTS

Recommendations for *Framework* updates.

CONSIDERATIONS

#1. BE CLEAR ABOUT THE PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

WHAT WE HEARD

Importance of using the *Framework* as a **shared “north star” for the system** and being a tool to inspire and drive change

A **need for clarity between the purpose of the *Framework*** as opposed to other guiding documents

Importance of how **families and other beneficiaries should be included** in design, dissemination and use

An interest in how to **use the *Framework* guide work** and support implementation

WHAT WE LEARNED

Other State Frameworks:

- Purpose statements in other state plans were similarly **high level and aspirational** in tone
- Some included **guidance on use and implementation**

Other CO Frameworks:

- Purpose statements often focused on **creating a common understanding and set of strategies for use** across multiple agencies and programs

POTENTIAL SHIFTS

Add a brief introduction that clearly defines the purpose and audience for the *Framework*

Create a “user guide” geared toward specific audiences as a tool to support use of the *Framework*

CONSIDERATIONS

#2. IT SHOULD BE HIGHLY GRAPHIC AND ACCESSIBLE IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES, FORMATS AND PLATFORMS

WHAT WE HEARD

Format could be **simpler**. "**Less is more.**"

Importance of **language justice** to make sure it is accessible

Current use and familiarity with the Framework varies, providing an **opportunity to increase awareness**

An interest in **communication tools and other resources** that would support more sharing, learning and use of the *Framework*

WHAT WE LEARNED

Other State Frameworks:

- **Graphics** are used to visually describe the plan or system
- Often include "**at a glance**" companion documents to provide clarity and encourage use

POTENTIAL SHIFTS

Design a highly visual theory of change as the central part of the *Framework* with supporting content

Center language needs in writing and sharing the *Framework*

Create various communication tools and resources as opportunities for continued learning and sharing

CONSIDERATIONS

#3. HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AS GROUNDING

WHAT WE HEARD

Emphasize the **importance of the early years** and opportunity that exists for strengthening the early childhood system

A **call for greater equity** as context and considerations for the future, particularly when recalling lessons learned from the pandemic

Elevate the **need for a culture shift** – embracing the idea that early childhood is a community issue... it's not "their kids," but "our kids."

WHAT WE LEARNED

Other State Frameworks:

- Often have an introduction on the **importance of the early years**
- Include a statement of support **to sustain a strong system while addressing challenges related to the pandemic**

Other CO Frameworks:

- **Recent advancements in the state's early childhood landscape** provide context and opportunities for the *Framework* refresh

POTENTIAL SHIFTS

Elevate the importance of early childhood and the **shared responsibility** of creating environments where all young children can thrive

Reflect the current context as a key part of updating the *Framework*

CONSIDERATIONS

#4. KEEP THE VISION CLEAR, BRIEF AND CONSISTENT

WHAT WE HEARD

Emphasis on the **value the Framework brings as a tool to communicate a shared vision**

Support for **keeping the vision the same** with its focus on young children

Important to **differentiate the Framework's vision** from the vision of any one agency, department or initiative

Recognition of the benefits of having a **clear and brief vision statement**

WHAT WE LEARNED

Other State Frameworks:

- Include a **high level, aspirational vision statement**
- Include a **mission statement** for additional context
- A specific focus on the importance of **equity**

Other CO Frameworks:

- Align their vision and **ground their work in the Framework**

POTENTIAL SHIFTS

Ground in the current vision to leverage the benefits of a concise statement and to create consistency

Make clearer connections to how all the components of the *Framework* are leading towards the vision

CONSIDERATIONS

#5. ELEVATE A CLEAR SET OF FOUNDATIONAL VALUES FOR GUIDING THE SYSTEM

WHAT WE HEARD

Many of the **current principles remain a priority**

Other important values were named: valuing the expertise of families, providers, and communities; being able to meet the differing needs across communities

Desire to **define and expand on equity** as a value

Importance of **establishing a shared understanding in foundational beliefs**

WHAT WE LEARNED

Other State Frameworks:

- Variety of approaches to **framing values and guiding principles**
- Explicit **focus on equity**

Other CO Frameworks:

- Principles included **similar or aligned to those in the Framework**

POTENTIAL SHIFTS

Expand on existing values to create statements that further define what each means if held true

Include equity as a value that is held and threaded throughout

Add additional values to capture other shared beliefs and priorities

CONSIDERATIONS

#6. EXPAND AND BETTER DEFINE CORE COMPONENTS SUPPORTING THE SYSTEM

WHAT WE HEARD

Varied understandings and definitions of what the early childhood system is, should look like, and consist of

Depict a system **centered on children and families and show collaboration** across the multiple layers of support

Workforce is a top priority. Other system components raised included **leadership, funding, and data and research.**

WHAT WE LEARNED

Other State Frameworks:

- Define the **"system"**
- Focus **system infrastructure as part of strategic goals and objectives**

Other CO Frameworks:

- Include focus on **infrastructure**
- **Important progress and developments across many focus areas** – leadership; data collection and alignment; funding

POTENTIAL SHIFTS

Expand on the current system components (the "green circles") to **highlight infrastructure elements**

Highlight the important role that community plays in the early childhood system

CONSIDERATIONS

#7. SHOW INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND MULTITUDE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPPORTS

WHAT WE HEARD

Desire to **"see themselves"** in the system

Show how **interrelated and connected services and supports** are across the system

Desire to see other **areas explicitly name** like integrated mental health, early intervention and special ed services, and child welfare

Importance of **economic supports**

WHAT WE LEARNED

Other State Frameworks:

- Other states call out the **diverse services that support child and family wellbeing**

Other CO Frameworks:

- Progress being made to **address multiple areas of family and child support**

POTENTIAL SHIFTS

Define the current domains to represent the comprehensiveness of services across the early childhood system

Add a fourth domain to highlight the importance of economic supports

Show how all the early childhood supports are **interrelated and connected**

CONSIDERATIONS

#8. REVISIT OUTCOMES BASED ON CURRENT NEEDS OF YOUNG CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

WHAT WE HEARD

Ongoing needs related to **improving access**

Importance of **strengthening quality**

Emphasis on need for **increasing coordination and alignment**

Support for embedding equity into all areas of systems building (and the *Framework*)

WHAT WE LEARNED

Other State Frameworks:

- References to **quality, access, coordination and equity**

Other CO Frameworks:

- Ongoing statewide efforts focus on **access, quality and coordination**
- **Equity** continues to be a **priority**

POTENTIAL SHIFTS

Update outcomes to ensure they reflect the recent priorities of families and communities

Emphasize the **importance of coordination and alignment**

Embed equity as part of all actions and outcomes to reach the vision

OTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

- Enhanced **tools to support implementation** (*Reflection or assessment tool*)
- Create **"user guides"** for specific audiences
- Interactive versions or other **innovative ways of engaging with the tool** (*interactive version that is "clickable", mobile app*)
- Metrics or a dashboard aligned to the *Framework* to **measure and monitor progress**
- Clear **ownership** (*leaders*) of the *Framework* that would **share its importance and encourage its use**

QUESTIONS?



THE UPDATED FRAMEWORK MAPPING THE POTENTIAL SHIFTS



ABOUT THE FRAMEWORK

ABOUT THE FRAMEWORK

Every child deserves a strong start. The first few years of life can offer a great window of opportunity. We know that infants and young children grow and develop more quickly than during any other stage of life. Experiences during the early years can build a strong foundation for all future health, learning, and success. At the same time, there are also significant barriers that children may face that prevent them from reaching their full potential. Understanding this, Colorado has made an important commitment to its young children. The *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* creates a shared vision for Colorado where *all children are valued, healthy and thriving*. Since 2008, the state's early childhood community has embraced the *Framework* as a guiding tool to build a strong early childhood system designed to provide a comprehensive range of high-quality supports during this most critical time of life. This newly revised *Framework* provides an up-to-date version of the document that takes into account the most recent advances, as well as some of the ongoing challenges, in the state. This refresh seeks to provide renewed energy toward the bold and common goal to create a Colorado where every child is able to thrive.

THE FRAMEWORK IS . . .

A shared vision for Colorado, designed to promote action and dialogue about the future of young children across the state. It offers a broad, yet ambitious theory of change that is grounded in values, a strong early childhood system, and improved outcomes to give our children the strongest start possible.

A tool designed by and for the community to read, consider, and use. It has been informed by the many voices of those connected to Colorado's early childhood system—including families, early childhood professionals, local and state leaders. It is an open invitation for all stakeholders seeking to understand what is established and what is possible to drive change on behalf of babies and our youngest children.

An iterative and living document that is meant to capture the best thinking of the time and be responsive to the current context. It builds upon the fundamentals of prior versions (adopted 2008 and updated 2015). It will never be final but will be nimble, iterative, and constantly evolving to improve.

THE FRAMEWORK IS NOT. . .

A document to overrule all others or to be the sole plan for early childhood in the state. There are a diverse range of organizations, agencies, and institutions that are pursuing their own plans and strategies. The *Framework* is designed to be supportive and to offer an overarching "North Star" to help align and promote collaboration among these ongoing efforts.

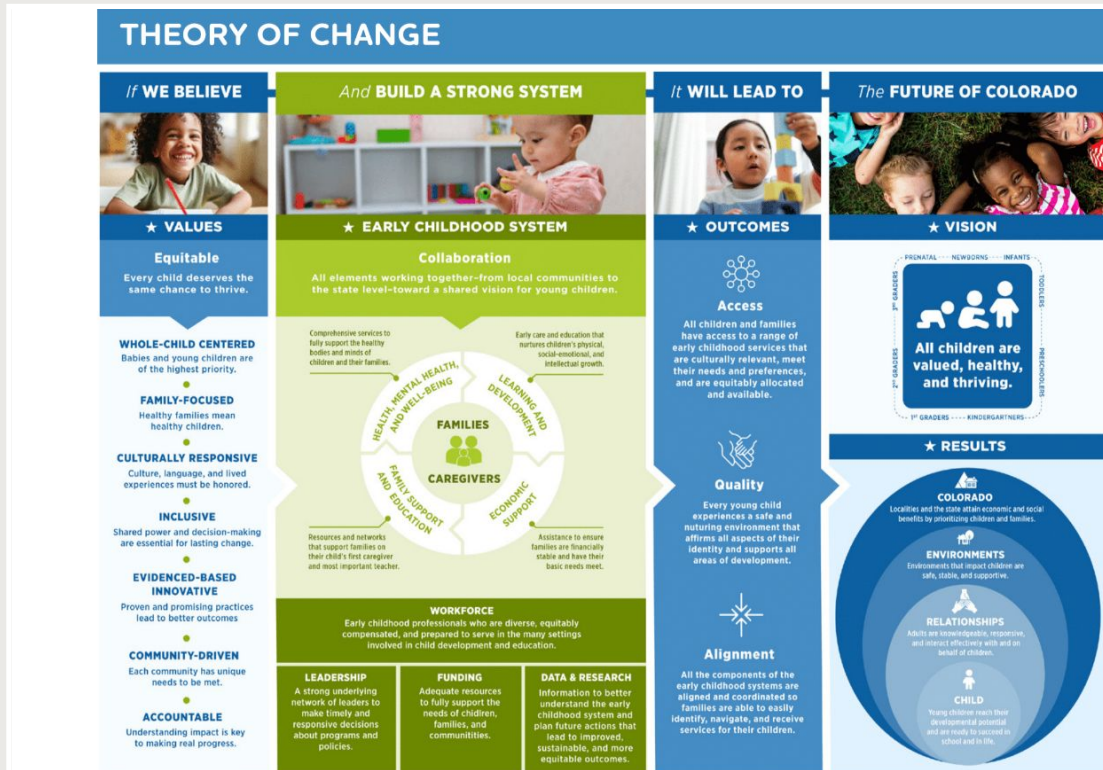
An instruction manual to share all the information needed to guide next steps. While this *Framework* lays out a broad vision, there will be more work to do in partnership to determine if, what, and how to change to meet our shared goals.

A perfect plan . . . The *Framework* was created with the hope that it would provide a set of clear ideas to build from and organize around. While it will not always be perfect, the hope is that it will continue to inspire and lead to lasting change on the journey to making Colorado a great place for young children to grow, learn, and thrive.

SHIFT

#1: Add a brief introduction that defines purpose and audience

THEORY OF CHANGE



SHIFTS

#2: Design a highly visual theory of change as central part of the *Framework*

#4: Make clearer connections to how components lead to the shared vision

VISION

THE VISION



All children are valued, healthy, and thriving.

A shared and bold vision for young children that paves the way for a stronger Colorado.

WHY DOES THIS VISION MATTER?

Children are born with great potential. The science is clear: children are born learning. Young brains are developing faster than during any other period in life, forming one million new neural connections every second. Research tells us that the early years of a child's life—from prenatal through age 8—set the foundation for all future health, learning, and well-being.

Positive early childhood experiences make a difference. Babies and young children develop best in relationships with warm, nurturing caregivers and when they have access to a range of high-quality early childhood supports. A nourishing early childhood environment is linked to life-long benefits, such as academic success, higher earnings, improved health, lower participation in social service programs, and lower chances of involvement with the criminal justice system. The benefits of responsive early childhood services even extend beyond children, enabling families to participate in the workforce and creating jobs in local communities. Also, research conducted by Nobel Laureate James Heckman shows that effective programs for children experiencing poverty and related social injustices can provide about \$6 for each \$1 invested—delivering a return on investment of 13% over time. The result: stronger children lead to stronger families, communities, and society as a whole.

Unfortunately, not all children have access to the resources needed to thrive. While the early years are an incredible window of opportunity, it can also be a time of intense vulnerability for children. Inequities that have been built into our current systems limit access to positive early childhood experiences, particularly for those who are Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other communities of color. Barriers such as hunger, housing issues, and lack of education options continue to prevent children from reaching their full potential for learning and success. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced even more hardship and shed new light on long-standing issues that have widened gaps for young children and their families. For these reasons, high-quality early childhood experiences have remained out of reach for many children.

FIVE FAST FACTS

- The foundation for all future health, learning, and well-being is set during the early years—prenatal to age 8.
- During the first few years, a child's brain is developing faster than any other period in life—forming one million new neural connections every second.
- Studies show high-quality early childhood programs can lead to lifelong benefits, such as academic success, higher earnings, improved health, and lower participation in social service programs and criminal justice system.
- Investments in effective programs during the early years offer a return of 13% over time—about \$6 for each \$1 invested.
- Colorado has made a clear commitment to its youngest children to make sure they are valued, born healthy, and set up to thrive

SHIFTS

- #4: Ground in the current vision to leverage benefits of a concise and consistent vision statement
- #3: Elevate the importance of early childhood and shared responsibility
- #3: Reflect current context

VALUES

VALUES

Our values are beliefs that must hold true to give our youngest children the best chance for success.

CORE VALUE

Equity must be embedded in and centered throughout all of our work. In order for us to achieve our vision, we will need to have an ongoing commitment to addressing racism and other social injustices—first and foremost—as the key to create an early childhood system where all young children can thrive.

EQUITABLE

Every child deserves the same chance to thrive. Equity means that every child has a fair and just opportunity to reach their full potential. This involves prioritizing resources for children and families who have been most impacted by systemic inequities so that outcomes are no longer predicted by race, zip code, ability, or any other social factors.

MORE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

Alongside equity, these additional beliefs are vital to shaping what we do and how we do it in order to ensure that babies, young children, and their families have what they need for overall well-being and success.

WHOLE-CHILD CENTERED

Babies and young children are of the highest priority. Colorado's early childhood system is designed to support children from prenatal through age 8 across the state. Every effort must consider the many different strengths and needs of children across all areas of development to give them the strongest start in life.

FAMILY- FOCUSED

Healthy families mean healthy children. The best way to support children is to ensure the people who care for them have what they need to create stable, healthy and nurturing environments. This means services for families are most effective when they respond to each family uniquely and build on their assets, knowledge, and skills.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

Culture, language, and lived experiences must be honored. Efforts connected to the early childhood system must work to respect and affirm various cultural backgrounds, languages, and other aspects of identity. This includes centering diversity in all interactions, practices, policies, and outcomes to ensure that children, families, and communities are fully supported.

SHIFTS

- #5: Include and elevate equity as a value held and threaded throughout
- #5: Expand on existing values to further define what each value means
- #5: Add additional values to capture other priorities

EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

A strong early childhood system is one that offers a wide range of programs, supported by a solid foundation, and with all pieces working toward the same goal.

PROGRAMS

Colorado is committed to creating an environment where all children are surrounded by supported families and programs that ensure they are safe, healthy, and ready for lifelong learning.

HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING

Comprehensive services to fully support the healthy bodies and minds of children and their families.

This includes: Health care • Oral health and dental care • Infant and early childhood mental health • Reproductive health • Maternal health and prenatal care • WIC • Nutrition supports • Insurance and Medicaid access • Early identification and intervention ... and more.

FAMILY SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

Resources and networks that support families as their child's first caregiver and most important teacher.

This includes: Home visiting • Family resource centers • Child abuse and neglect prevention • Faith communities • Peer networks • Respite care • Training and advocacy support ... and more.

WHAT IS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM?

A strong early childhood system includes the following:

- **PROGRAMS:** all child- and family-serving programming—such as early learning, health, housing, and economic development
- **FOUNDATIONS:** interdependent components of infrastructure—including governance, funding, and data
- **COLLABORATION:** connections of each of these elements to each other

Source: BUILD Initiative



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Early care and education that nurtures children's physical, social-emotional, and intellectual growth.

This includes: Head Start and Early Head Start • Parent partnerships • Preschool / Pre-K • Center and home-based childcare • Special education • Family, friend, and neighbor care • Libraries, museums, and other cultural institutions ... and more.

ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Assistance to ensure families are financially stable and have their basic needs met.

This includes: Job training and placement • Credit counseling • Food assistance • Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) • Housing support • Financial supports • Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) • Tax credits • Transportation • Internet access ... and more.

Sources: Adapted from BUILD Initiative

09 THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COLORADO FRAMEWORK

FOUNDATIONS

Colorado's early childhood system must be supported by a solid foundation so it can function efficiently, effectively, and equitably.



"When I think about early childhood, I think it is a broad spectrum across multiple settings and multiple professionals to reach young children in our state. And that we really have to be thoughtful and intentional about making sure we're really leveraging all of those opportunities to support young children."

— Early Childhood Systems Leader



"When I think about the vulnerability of young children under six years old ... how impressionable they are ... how important a caring relationship with an adult provider is ... and how much time providers spend with young children, I can't get over the fact that the compensation is not equitable. It's not even a living wage. I would love to see greater compensation."

— Early Childhood Provider

SHIFTS

#6: Expand on current system components ("green circles") to highlight infrastructure

#6: Highlight important role of community

#7: Define the current domains to represent the comprehensiveness of services

#7: Add a fourth domain (economic supports)

#7: Show how all supports are interrelated and connected

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

OUTCOMES + RESULTS

The outcomes and results identify how we will know and what it will take to truly reach our shared vision for all young children in Colorado.

ACCESS

All children and families have access to a range of early childhood services that are culturally relevant, meet their needs and preferences, and are equitably allocated and available.

What it looks like:

- The public has access to information that shares the importance of the early years and what supports are available.
- Awareness and political will are built to advance support for early childhood among decision-makers and in policy solutions.
- Reliable outreach and communication from trusted sources to connect families to early childhood services.
- All outreach and public-facing resources meet the language and accessibility needs of communities.
- Barriers to eligibility and applying for early childhood supports are removed.
- Families are able to find easily accessible and affordable early childhood services.
- A range of care options is available to meet the unique needs and preferences of families—no matter the age of the child, ability, hours of care needed, or location in the state.
- Communities that have historically had the least access and/or have been marginalized or underrepresented are prioritized.



"I want it to be easy and joyful to have a baby here. Instead, it's medical bills, worrying about my health, worrying about breastfeeding, and most importantly trying to find good child care for a baby that I can afford."

— Family Member of Young Child

QUALITY

Every young child experiences a safe and nurturing environment that affirms all aspects of their identity and supports all areas of development.

What it looks like:

- Settings and practices foster the "whole child" through physical activity, health and nutrition, social and emotional development, and developmentally appropriate learning.
- Children with health, behavioral or developmental needs receive timely, comprehensive and individualized services and supports.
- All settings promote mental health and wellbeing through early identification, consultation and treatment.
- Families experience integrated and preventative maternal and child physical, behavioral and oral health services.
- Formal and informal care and education environments are supported to reach the highest levels of quality as defined by standards and communities.
- All providers and settings are responsive to the culture, languages, beliefs and values of children and their families – including children from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, dual/multi-language learners, immigrant and refugee families, and tribal communities.
- Children and families experience anti-bias, trauma-informed and healing-centered practices.
- Family engagement and leadership opportunities exist within programs, schools, and communities.
- Children live and learn in safe and stable environments that are free of toxins, and they have access to affordable, nutritious foods and reliable housing.
- Cultural institutions and third spaces (such as libraries, museums, and playgrounds) provide opportunities for enrichment, recreation, and social connection.
- A focus on continuous quality improvement leads to lasting change and positive outcomes for young children.



"It's about genuine, authentic, warm implementation of services. It's not just access—it's the actual delivery."

— Family Member of Young Child

The OUTCOMES of a strong early childhood system . . .

Colorado is committed to creating an environment where all children are surrounded by supported families and programs that ensure they are safe, healthy, and ready for lifelong learning.

SHIFTS

- #8: Update outcomes to ensure they reflect the recent priorities of families and communities
- #8: Embed equity as part of all actions and outcomes to reach vision for all
- #8: Emphasize the importance of coordination and alignment

ALIGNMENT

SUPPORTIVE TOOLS



Deck and talkings
points



FAQ



Social media



Brochure



Website language



Press release

SHIFTS

#2: Create various
communications tools and
opportunities for continued
learning

#2: Center language needs in
writing and sharing

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair kissing a baby on the cheek. The baby is wearing a red and black plaid shirt and is smiling. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and a building. A semi-transparent dark grey box is overlaid at the bottom of the image, containing white text.

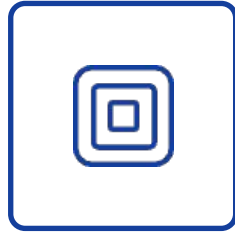
HEARING FROM YOU
REFLECTIONS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

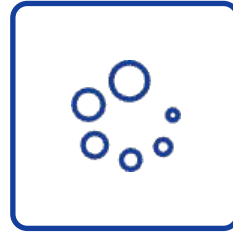
Based on what you have heard today...



What might feel exciting about the refreshed *Framework*?



What resonates or aligns with your thinking or experience?



Is there anything doesn't feel clear, or that you would like to understand better?



Any other important ideas to share as we work to finalize?

WHAT'S NEXT?



OUR PROCESS

- Incorporate feedback from the Steering Committee and ECLC to finalize the revised *Framework*
- Draft communication materials to support sharing and dissemination

STEERING COMMITTEE

- **Post Work = Exit Survey**
- **Upcoming Engagement:**
Program and Alignment Subcommittee Meeting - July 14
- **Next ECLC Meeting:**
August 24th meeting to share final Framework and endorsement

A decorative background consisting of a solid orange color with a pattern of white-outlined, overlapping triangles. The triangles are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some pointing up and some pointing down, creating a complex geometric design.

Break Time!
Back in 10 minutes...



State Agency Updates Questions & Answer



Public Comment and Commissioner Updates



Appreciation for Outgoing ECLC Member and Early Childhood Champions



ECLC Project Updates

Shannon Wilson, ECLC Administrator

2022 Annual Report

- The annual report will be released soon!
- We will receive a draft from the designers soon, which will be shared with commissioners.
- State agency reps and co-chairs, please review your portions and send any edits.
- All commissioners are welcome to provide feedback.
- Once it is released, please share with your networks.

10-Year Strategic Plan

Vision: All children are valued, healthy and thriving

Guiding Principles & Functions

From its unique position as the federally authorized state advisory council on early childhood....



Strategies

...the ECLC focuses its time, energy, and resources to influence systems and policy advancements.....

- Center family experience, satisfaction, and need, ensuring responsive and accessible service delivery
 - Create a public forum to examine challenges and barriers to an equitable, comprehensive early childhood system and identify creative solutions
 - Request data needed from public and private partners to inform strategic policy recommendations
 - Develop and promote innovative policy change to strengthen Colorado's statewide mixed delivery system, increasing access to affordable, quality care
 - Monitor and provide feedback on state agency strategic plans and priorities to promote alignment, mutual reinforcement, and interagency partnerships
- Develop policy strategies for stronger recruitment and retention, increasing workforce diversity across all leadership levels
 - Champion strategies to enhance early childhood workforce compensation across public and private settings
 - Advocate for the public and private funding needed to fully implement Colorado's Comprehensive Early Childhood Workforce Plan
 - Regularly review workforce data to advise on new opportunities and any course corrections
- Advocate for and monitor progress on a multi-agency integrated early childhood data system
 - Inform and support the use of a data-driven evaluation and learning approach so state initiatives are designed with accountability measures and a plan to evaluate impact
 - Promote collaborative, interagency, multi-year fiscal planning for early childhood
 - Set the direction for fiscal policies and decisions that prioritize children and families across public and private systems

Results

...so that Colorado achieves its vision for early childhood.

- Colorado is successful in administering a system of comprehensive early childhood care and education supports so that *all families can easily identify, navigate and access services for their children.*
- Colorado recruits, retains, and equitably compensates a diverse and qualified early childhood workforce *that provides quality care and education to children and their families.*
- Colorado's early childhood system has the data needed to make evidence-based decisions and the funding resources to put best practices and plans into place, so *all communities have what is needed to best support children and families.*

Levers of Change: The ECLC aims to increase access to data, enhance financing, and inform policies by utilizing a variety of public and private resources, such as:

- Family, provider, and community voice
- Federal, state and local public investments
- State agency plans, goals and budgets
- National best practices
- State early childhood plans and roadmaps
- Private investments
- Service and program data
- Workforce data

ECLC 10-Year Strategic Plan

- Currently sharing the plan with stakeholder groups including subcommittees and working groups.
- Please share the plan with interested parties, including state agency leadership, to determine areas for collaboration.
- Next steps:
 - Use the plan to revisit subcommittee and working group charters.
 - Use the Plan to schedule speakers and discussions for ECLC and subcommittee meetings.
 - Create a mechanism to show progress on the Plan

Proposed Language Change

- “Colorado is successful in administering a system of comprehensive **early childhood care and education supports** so that *all families can easily identify, navigate and access services for their children.*”
 - Change to “...early childhood supports and services...”
- Colorado recruits, retains, and equitably compensates a diverse and qualified early childhood workforce *that provides quality **care and education** to children and their families.*
 - Change to “... supports and services...”

Comprehensive Statewide Strategic Plan

- Beginning the process of creating an updated Comprehensive Statewide Strategic Plan
 - Updating and rebranding the *Colorado Shines Brighter Birth through Five Strategic Plan*
 - Based on findings from this year's statewide B-5 Needs Assessment, the refreshed *Colorado Early Childhood Framework*, other recent strategic initiatives; and stakeholder engagement
- We will be working with [Start Early](#) to complete this project between July - December

Comprehensive Statewide Strategic Plan

- Currently in the process of re-forming the Strategic Plan Working Group (formerly Colorado Shines Brighter working group) under the Program Quality and Alignment subcommittee
- There will be opportunities to provide feedback at ECLC and PQA subcommittee throughout the process and a vote for endorsement in December
- If you would like to be involved in this process, email shannonm.wilson@state.co.us.



COLORADO
Department of Early Childhood



EARLY MILESTONES
COLORADO



Comprehensive Early Childhood Workforce Plan

ECLC

June 22, 2023

Project Phases: September 2022 – December 2023

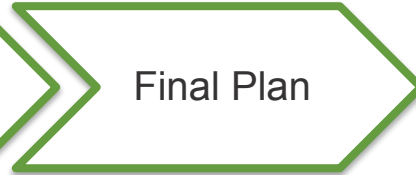
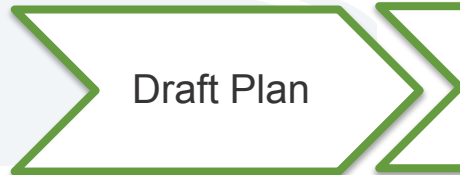
September 2022 – January 2023



February – April 2023



May – December 2023



Opportunities to provide input

- Monthly Comprehensive [EC Workforce Plan Strategic Advisory Group](#)
 - Discussion limited to the advisory group; notes shared after meetings
- Regular check-ins with [Early Childhood Workforce Development Subcommittee](#)
- August ECLC Meeting- update on progress and opportunity to give input
- October ECLC Meeting- draft of plan (tentative)
- December ECLC Meeting- vote to endorse plan

Contacts

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EARLYMILESTONES.ORG

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Co-Chairs' Next Steps and Final Thoughts

ECLC

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Next Meeting:

August 24, 2023

9:00 am - 12:00 pm



Plan to come in person to the CDEC offices!

Thank you!

ECLC State Agency Updates

June 22, 2023

Colorado Department of Early Childhood

With the first two rounds of Universal Preschool (UPK) Colorado complete, 27,457 families – or 43.6% of the 4-year-olds in the state — have accepted their provider matches and their children will attend the state-funded high-quality, voluntary mixed delivery preschool program this fall. There are seats available in every county in the state, and families can still apply to participate. The next set of matches will be sent to families on June 29. The next deadline for families to apply is July 13.

Colorado Department of Education

The Colorado Department of Education is in the process of transitioning commissioners as Katy Anthes steps down after seven years in the role. CDE welcomes Susana Cordova as the new commissioner of education who will start on June 26th. During this period CDE has continued to work with the Colorado Department of Early Childhood with the implementation of UPK. CDE and CDEC are co-facilitating working groups related to school finance and implementation structures for UPK.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Developmental Screening and Referral (DSR) E-referral Pilot

(Michele.Coates@state.co.us)

- The DSR e-referral [phase one pilot evaluation](#) of implementation with the project's first health champion (Salud) is now complete. Based on lessons learned in phase one, phase two is now launching with Children's Hospital Colorado, a significantly larger health system.

Child and Adult Care Food Program/CACFP

(Naomi.Steenson@state.co.us/Chrissy.Nichols@state.co.us)

- **CACFP has created a new position, CACFP Coach and Liaison:** As mentioned in the Final Department of Early Childhood [Transition Plan](#), the CACFP has been identified as a program that is critical to ensuring cross-agency partnership among CDEC and CDPHE. In this new position, Chrissy Nichols will serve as a coach and mentor to nutrition consultants at CDPHE-CACFP and as a liaison to the Colorado Department of Early Childhood.
- **CACFP & CCCAP Qualified Exempt Launched June 6, 2023:** Effective June 6th, Qualified Exempt home providers enrolled in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program are eligible to enroll in the CACFP through a Family Child Care Home Sponsor. CACFP met with partner advocates, family child care home sponsoring organizations, and CDEC/CDPHE on June 15th to discuss additional outreach strategies and rollout. Help us spread the word! This [link](#) includes communication to providers and partners available in English and Spanish.
- **The Keep Kids Fed Act Sunsets June 30, 2023** - The Keep Kids Fed Act, passed June 25, 2022, provided a variety of waiver extensions and increased reimbursement rates. In

particular, for CACFP an additional \$0.10/meal and Tier II Family Child Care Homes qualifying for Tier I rates. These are set to expire June 30, 2023.

- **Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Pandemic:** USDA-FNS issued the first report, part one of three reports, on Child Nutrition Program Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic, March through September 2020. [Link](#).

Colorado WIC/COWIC (Erin.Kendrick@state.co.us)

- **Infant Formula:** The formula waivers in place during the formula shortage crisis expired April 30, 2023. Monthly formula redemption has returned to pre-shortage levels.
- **Physical Presence, Remote Benefits & Other Waiver Extensions:** The USDA has exercised its authority under ARPA to allow states to request an extension of the physical presence and remote benefits waivers beyond the end of the public health emergency until September 2026. These waivers allow for remote certification and recertification of participants while establishing a 60-day window for the collection of anthropometric data (ht/wt/hgb). COWIC has been approved for these waivers and is developing guidance for our local WIC agencies.

Colorado Farm to Child ([Britt Martens, brittany.martens@state.co.us](mailto:brittany.martens@state.co.us))

Upcoming Opportunities to Engage:

- **Colorado Farm to Child Data Landscape Webinar**

June 29, 2023 1:00pm MST

[Register here](#)

Join the Farm to Colorado Specialist, Britt Martens, to hear results from the 2023 Colorado Farm to Child Statewide Survey. This webinar will include comparisons to the 2018 Farm to Child Survey, discuss increases in participation and provide key takeaways and trends for continued program growth. Participants will understand how to access data resources for use in future grant writing opportunities

- **Introduction to Farm to Child Webinar**

Thursday August 17, 2023 1:00-2:30pm

[Register here](#)

Join the Farm to Colorado Specialist to learn about the three core components of Farm to Child; gardening, nutrition education, and local food purchasing. Additional learning topics will include local food and CACFP best practices, how to implement available resources, and how to begin your Farm to Child journey with community inclusion and equity.

- **Farm to Child Gathering**

September 9, 2023, Fort Morgan - Save the Date

[Register here](#)

This full day in-person event will include 6 learning sessions, lunch, a travel stipend, and the opportunity to participate in a Farm to Child Collaborative meeting. Learning sessions will include Culinary Skills, Farm to Child 101, Gardening for Child Care, Local Food Regulations and more.

Visit the [Farm to Child website](#) to access resources on gardening, nutrition education, and local food purchasing available in English and Spanish.

To join the Farm to Child Collaborative newsletter and meeting list please [click here](#).

Oral Health (ashleigh.kirk@state.co.us):

- **The new Colorado Oral Health (ColoradoOralHealth.org) website has launched!** In an effort to streamline information on programs the Oral Health Unit supports, the Colorado Oral Health website now hosts the Cavity Free at Three program, School-based Oral Health resources (Smart Mouths, Smart Kids), dental integration initiatives, community water fluoridation, and much more. The Colorado Oral Health website is also a hub for oral health initiatives in Colorado, supporting partners to plan individual efforts within the *Framework to Advance Oral Health Equity in Colorado*, offering shared data, resources and updated information on oral public health strategies.