



**TRANSITION
ADVISORY
GROUP**

Welcome

Agenda

- Welcome
- Voices from the field
- Logistics
- Review charge
- Discussion of Transition Plan/ Feedback session
- Update from subgroups
- Looking Ahead: Universal preschool
- Next steps
- Public comment

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Voices from the Field

**Heather Hawk
Executive Director,
Early Childhood Council of
La Plata County**

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Logistics

Meeting Norms

- Come prepared.
- Mute yourself when not speaking.
- Stay engaged (e.g., actively participate and use the chat function).
- Be mindful of how much “air time” each member receives.
- Always assume good intent.
- All ideas are valued.
- Center equity in all conversations.

Expectations

Every meeting you should expect the following:

- **Via e-mail:**
 - Agenda for meeting
 - Suggested pre-reading
- **In meeting:**
 - Subgroup updates
 - Background information
 - Focused discussion around a specific part of the transition plan
 - Closing/next steps

TAG Meeting Schedule

Meetings will take place on Wednesdays from 3–5:30pm MST

Meeting Dates	Key Focus Areas
July 14	–Kick-off meeting: Introductions and mission/vision discussion
August 4	–Movement of programs to new department –Department structure & timeline of move
August 25	–Revisit program movement, funding & timeline –Discussion: local structures & partnerships
September 15	–Complete program review including Special Education –Governance of DEC –Local structures & partnerships –Technology and blending/braiding funds to support unification
September 22	–Revisit governance of DEC –Revisit discussion on local structures & partnerships –Revisit discussion of technology and blending/braiding funding
October 20	–Review transition plan draft –Universal, voluntary preschool preview
November 17	–Universal, voluntary preschool implementation
December 1 *NEW*	–Universal, voluntary preschool implementation
December 15	– Review of draft recommendations for universal preschool

Feedback Form Responses

A reminder about the Feedback Form [responses](#):

- The responses are all shared publicly on the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) website removing all identifying information
- TAG members should review the responses in the feedback form before every meeting
- These responses are valuable input for this stakeholder engagement process



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**Discussion: Department of
Early Childhood Draft
Transition Plan**

Draft Transition Plan

The draft transition report due to the ECLC and legislature by November 1 was released on October 8. It covered the following topics, and reflected the recommendations from the TWG based on input, engagement, and feedback from subgroups, TAG, numerous audience-specific listening and engagement sessions, and the general public.

- Vision, Mission, Values, and Guiding Principles
- Governance
- Structure of DEC
- Programs and Services to Transition to DEC Beginning July 2022
- Fiscal Structures and Funding Transition to DEC Beginning July 2022
- Re-evaluation of Transition by July 2025
- Ongoing Alignment and Collaboration with Other State Agencies
- Blending and Braiding Funding
- Technology and Data Systems
- Recommendations for Workforce

Recommendation #1: Adopt a Vision, Mission, and Values.

Vision

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

Mission

The Colorado Department of Early Childhood champions a comprehensive, community-informed, effective, high-quality and equitable early childhood system that supports the care, education and well-being of all Colorado's young children, their families and early childhood professionals in all settings.

Values

- We value equity across the early childhood system and are committed to utilizing an equity-focused lens to drive priorities and decision making.
- We believe formal and informal care environments can provide high-quality, developmentally appropriate care and learning.
- We respect and appreciate the diversity and strengths of all of our communities in Colorado.
- We believe accessibility to early childhood services considers affordability, cultural responsiveness, and parent choice.
- We value an innovative and expansive approach to our early childhood system.
- We value a whole-family approach.

Recommendation #2: Adopt the ECLC's Guiding Principles.

The TAG and TWG adopted the ECLC's guiding principles to further ground this plan in the ongoing work.



Recommendation #3: Build a diverse, equity-driven, expert leadership team.

The Department of Early Childhood (DEC) will require a leadership team with a diverse set of skills, a strong focus on equity, and significant expertise.

In addition, TWG recommends:

- Program delivery should be organized around functions of the early childhood system, rather than around the administration of individual programs and grants, to create more cohesion for the field.
- DEC should maintain a strong commitment to data and a strong, responsible data collection process that includes data privacy requirements, and should leverage technology to improve user experiences.

Recommendation #3 (cont): Build a diverse, equity-driven, expert leadership team.

DEC's leadership team should include:

- An expert in policy and governmental affairs.
- A finance expert who is oriented toward using their significant understanding of financial regulations to find innovative solutions that meet Colorado's funding needs.
- A program lead who is charged with improving the coherence of experience for children, families, providers, and workforce throughout the system.
- A lead who is charged with maintaining partnerships and collaborations across departments.
- An effective leader to develop a robust data collection and analysis system that is used to inform future strategies and guide decision making.

This team must focus on DEC's legislative charge to streamline and enhance the child, family, workforce, and provider experience.

Recommendation #4: Establish a Rules and Regulations Advisory Council to advise the Executive Director on rules and regulations.

To facilitate meaningful advice, consultation, and collaboration about rulemaking guidance, the TWG recommends the creation of a **Rules and Regulations Advisory Council**.

To maintain a unified and cohesive vision, TWG recommends the Executive Director hold final rulemaking authority for DEC programs, based on the advice of the Rules and Regulations Advisory Council.

Recommendation #4 (cont): Establish a Rules and Regulations Advisory Council to advise the Executive Director on rules and regulations.

The Rules and Regulations Advisory Council at a minimum should include:

- Parents or caregivers of children who are enrolled in a variety of public and private early childhood programs;
- Members of the early childhood workforce, including community and school based educators;
- Representatives of geographically and programmatically diverse community and school based public and private early childhood programs;
- Stakeholders representing historically underserved and under-resourced communities;
- County and school districts officials; and
- Representatives from foundations, businesses and advocacy organizations

Recommendations from the Rules and Regulations Advisory Council should be made by a majority vote, and the Executive Director should demonstrate the department thoroughly considers each of these recommendations.

By July 2025, DEC shall conduct an evaluation of its governance structure to determine if additional supports or structures are needed.

Recommendation #5: Maintain the advisory role of ECLC and other existing advisory groups.

As the federally authorized state advisory council, the ECLC has advised Colorado leaders on strategies to promote strong and research-backed early childhood practices across the state since its creation in 2010.

In moving to the new department, the ECLC should also serve in a key advisory role to the leadership of DEC, as well as continuing its advisory capacity to state policymakers, other departments, and the Governor's Office.

In addition to the advisory role of the ECLC, DEC should be guided by many other existing engagement structures currently advising Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and Colorado Department of Education (CDE).

Recommendation #6: Transition suggested programs and services to DEC.

TWG recommends the following programs and services begin to transition to the Department of Early Childhood beginning in July 2022:

- Colorado Preschool Program/Early Childhood At Risk Enhancement
- All services administered by the Early Childhood Workforce Development Team
- All programs and services administered by the Office of Early Childhood

The purpose of each of these programs aligns with the mission, vision, values, and guiding principles of DEC to create a comprehensive, community-informed, effective, high-quality, and equitable early childhood system.

TWG is also cognizant that the movement of programs will require thoughtful timing to ensure seamless access to services for children and families.

Recommendation #7: Re-evaluate program movement to DEC by 2025.

Establishing and maintaining a strong Department of Early Childhood will require a cycle of continuous review and improvement. After the department is established in July 2022, stakeholders recommended an ongoing review of the programs overseen by DEC.

DEC and ECLC, along with relevant agencies, stakeholders, and experts, should re-evaluate the movement of the following programs, if federal law allows, and potentially others, by July 2025:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- IDEA Part B (Preschool Special Education)

Recommendation #8: Address feedback on preschool special education.

TWG recommends IDEA Part B (Preschool Special Education) remain at CDE.

TWG also recommends the agencies work together in close collaboration to continue stakeholder engagement and address the concerns raised by stakeholders before the new statewide, universal preschool program launches in the 2023-2024 school year.

Recommendation #9: Provide DEC with fiscal authority and regulatory power.

As programs shift to the new department, DEC should also acquire the authority and regulatory power of the funding sources tied to these programs.

During the unification process, existing rules, regulations, statute, and budget structure of these programs may need to be amended to ensure consistency in regulation across the landscape.

Recommendation #10: Address five identified funding challenges.

These five challenges and solutions regarding the blending and braiding of funds were elevated by TAG and subgroups.

Challenge 1

Regulations are not aligned.

DEC should revise and streamline existing regulations (e.g. eligibility, program standards) across funding sources to ensure families and providers have flexibility with funds and less administrative burden.

Challenge 2

Separate programs have separate funding and technology structures.

DEC should utilize one simple application for universal preschool and related slot-based programs that is easy to use for families and providers. Over time, additional programs should be added to the unified application.

Recommendation #10 (cont): Address five identified funding challenges.

Challenge 3

Different funding sources flow to different local structures with no one responsible for ensuring cohesion.



DEC should itself blend and braid dollars at the state level before allocations are released for state-controlled funds. DEC should build local capacity to blend and braid local and federal-to-local funds with state funds across programs.

Challenge 4

Each community is different with differing current levels of coordination and implementation.



DEC should structure itself to empower local communities to lead and innovate based on their context. DEC should commence a review of community readiness to determine necessary supports for successful launch of the new preschool program and alignment.

Challenge 5

There is a lack of visibility into systems statewide.



DEC should prioritize, coordinate, adequately fund, and require the collection of data on access, need, demand, and capacity by demographics and locality across all program types and in a way that does not burden providers.

Recommendation #11: Utilize technology and data to make informed decisions.

To inform decisions for children and families in Colorado, DEC should:

- Collect data that provides additional information on system capacity, including number of open or closed classrooms, number of current teachers and workforce shortages, and overall availability of slots and current vacancies.
- Implement a child count process that provides insight into the unique number of children served at every publicly-funded site, across programs and funding sources, including unique identifiers when available, to encourage seamless K-12 integration while fully respecting the privacy of every student and family.
- Ensure that the child count process captures the number of children served by Colorado Shines quality level.
- Coordinate and require the collection of data in a way that does not burden providers and families.

Recommendation #12: Address Workforce Challenges

TAG and subgroups repeatedly raised challenges faced by the early childhood workforce. The following recommendations directly address those challenges.

Challenges	Recommendations
There are not enough members across the spectrum of the early childhood workforce due to challenges with recruitment and retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review qualification pathways for opportunities to reduce complexity while also maintaining a diverse workforce in all early childhood settings.● Work with higher education to develop pathways and recruitment strategies for professionals needed in the early childhood workforce, including early childhood teachers, occupational, physical, and speech therapists, mental health consultants, family support service providers, and others critical to meeting the needs of children and families.● Simplify, promote, and measure achievement using Colorado's Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators Competencies Framework for adults who work with families and children.● Support individuals to achieve these competencies through ongoing, accessible professional development.
Members of the early childhood workforce are not compensated appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop and elevate innovative compensation strategies for the early childhood workforce across all settings at the program, community, and state levels that are aligned with the achievement of defined competencies.
It is too hard and complex to be determined qualified to teach in licensed programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review the process for meeting early childhood workforce entry requirements to reduce barriers, increase retention, and minimize administrative burden at all levels of the system.

Transition Plan Process

Release Process

To date:

- TAG and subgroups previewed the content on October 7.
- The report and feedback form have been public since October 8th.
- The ECLC hosted on a statewide listening tour from October 11–15th with stops in Alamosa, Denver, Durango, Edwards, Fort Collins, Fort Morgan, Grand Junction, Montrose, Pueblo, and 2 virtual sessions.
- The feedback form has collected 82 responses (as of 12pm today), representing teachers, providers, parents, government agency staff, early childhood workforce.

Next:

- Edits to TWG
- Approval by ECLC

Draft Report Feedback

- Program Movement
 - **Support for the recommendation that DEC include comprehensive programs that offer whole family supports.**
 - There is no evidence federal law around IDEA would change so why reevaluate?
 - Reconsider ECWD staying at CDE
 - CPP should continue as a separate program to best serve most vulnerable children
 - Are county CCAP administrators going to have to report to DEC now? CCAP should stay administered locally
- Funding
 - **Public preschools and all providers should only have to work with one entity to receive funding**
 - Concern about staffing necessary to distribute funds within a community
 - **Support for the recommendation to streamline rules and regulations**
 - Local share and funding must be considered in the recommendations to blend and braid
- Mission and Vision
 - DEC cannot be everything for everyone and the dept will do better work with a more specific vision
 - Values should include having diversity of pedagogy and curriculum in addition to school choice
- Data
 - Recommend the collection of more holistic data (social determinants of health, economic security, etc)
 - Ensure that data collection is not duplicative
 - Consider the technological implications on systems from the creation of a single application
 - Leverage technology in innovative ways to create digital transformation in the system

Bolded are the comments that appeared repeatedly

Draft Report Feedback

- **Special Education**
 - **Concern about lack of detail in special education implementation and that a system of family choice will leave public schools primarily serving students with disabilities, minimizing the inclusivity of classrooms.**
 - **Concern about students with disabilities having fewer options for community based care and school districts bearing liabilities**
 - **Concern that districts won't be able to satisfy IDEA requirements**
 - **Concern about partnership between school districts and community providers in a parent choice model**
 - **SPED providers feel they have been excluded from the process and that their expertise has not been well included**
 - **Concern about year round SPED services–funding concern for districts**
 - **Family concerns about how services are being provided, and the IEP process, currently**
- **Governance**
 - **Consider moving the ECLC to the Governor's office**
 - **Concern about the balance of power of Gov appointing ED and ED having final authority**
 - **Consider membership of RRAC**
 - **Desire for representation from: Counties, rural areas, charter schools, education professionals, finance experts, health, mental health, family support services**
 - **How does this governance structure change the role of ECCs?**
 - **Consider having the ECLC, which is a governor appointed board, appoint the ED.**
 - **2025 is too far–should consider moving up evaluation timeline**
 - **PAC (Policy Advisory Council) and SubPAC should continue at DEC**
 - **Appreciation that DEC is set up to be iterative and improve continuously**

Throughout this process we also received feedback and questions that related more to the new preschool program which will be revisited at a later date.

Draft Report Feedback

- Workforce
 - **Need more specification on strategies for wage raises**
 - Should address key issue that the current credentialing pathway does not match Higher Ed
 - Level of credentialing should affect compensation
 - Appreciation that the workforce crisis was called out in the recommendations
- General
 - **Appreciation for the extensive engagement process that has been inclusive of many communities**
 - **Request for more detail on what organizing program delivery around functions means**
 - Request for a definitions: equity, underserved communities, and informal care
 - Ensure all part of the Early Childhood framework are valued
 - Language should be inclusive of all early childhood domains, beyond education
 - Ensure alignment with initiatives in K-12
 - Address how DEC will partner with other community partners (e.g. libraries)
 - Appreciation that these recommendations and DEC as a whole are being built for constituents, not around funding streams
 - Prioritization of current child and family experiences within the early childhood system

Bolted are the comments that appeared repeatedly

Discussion

Given these themes that have been raised by stakeholders,

- Is there anything you would like to add to these considerations that have been raised?
- Are there any other major concerns you have aside from these topics?
- Do you feel like more detail is needed for clarification in any area of the report?

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Subgroup Update

Subgroup Updates

Data and Technology	Governance, Operations, & Funding	Special Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History of unique child identifiers in Colorado and opportunities for implementation.• Data and knowledge use considerations in the new department.• Reflections on the data analysis component of the draft transition plan report.• Ideas for fostering data use culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrating health & well-being, and family support into the governance, funding, and operations of the new department.• Defining equity in early childhood.• Ensuring and incorporating equity into the governance, funding, and operations of the new department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local experiences of school districts and community-based programs.• Developing guiding principles of special education delivery in universal preschool.• Conditions and collaborations needed to ensure high-quality special education delivery in universal preschool.

Universal Preschool Subgroup Meetings

The universal preschool implementation subgroup has had 8 meetings to date and have spent time discussing the following questions:

- **Meeting #1:** What should be the outcomes/goals of the new universal, voluntary preschool program? What does successful implementation of this look like for families? For providers?
- **Meeting #2:** Brainstorm factors that should be considered when aligning or integrating the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) and the universal voluntary preschool program. With which other early childhood programs must a successful preschool program interact?
- **Meeting #3:** What local infrastructure exists to support implementation of the new preschool program? Brainstorm additional supports that might be valuable to a successful preschool program.
- **Meeting #4:** What should be considered when balancing universality of programming, serving children of greatest need, and ensuring access to half day or full day care (beyond 10 hours)?
- **Meeting #5:** Brainstorm ideas to encourage mixed delivery of the new preschool program services (e.g., quality standards, supports, funding rates)
- **Meeting #6:** Brainstorm ideas to ensure adequate teachers and staffing to implement UPK. Brainstorm ideas to ensure adequate facilities for implementation of UPK
- **Meeting #7:** What does the Human Centered Design study results tell us about the needs of providers in development of universal preschool?
- **Meeting #8:** What does the Human Centered Design study results tell us about the needs of families in development of universal preschool? How can enrollment processes incorporate HCD learnings?

**[Here](#) is a link to the completed UPK Subgroup reporting slides.

Universal Preschool Subgroup Meetings

The universal preschool implementation subgroup has had 8 meetings to date, the following are some of the key takeaways from these conversations:

- The new universal preschool program needs to work for all children, families, providers and communities. Family choice must be at the heart of how access to the program is designed.
- It must be EASY for all involved. One single system that is easy to use for providers and easy for families to enroll.
- The funding allocations must match the true cost of high-quality programming.
- Maintaining funding for at-risk populations protected through targeted funding like CPP is essential.
- Ensure there is one preschool program and that children with special needs get to access it like all children.
- “Communities need implementation support tailored to the individual community and need help with accountability and cooperation across relevant entities.”
- Coordinating the blending and braiding of funding should happen at the state level.
- Support the EC workforce and providers monetarily by making payments based on slots not attendance or earmarking funding specifically for PD and associated costs of attaining credentials.
- Ensure that there is a true mixed delivery system where family demand is being met and parents are empowered to choose what works best for them.
- Working families should get increased funding to help them get the full-day access to preschool that they need.
- A strong desire for continuing efforts to align to the K-12 system and build on the work that the P-3 office at CDE has taken on.
- Maintaining viability for the entire child care universe will be critical when thinking of funding sources that could service infant and toddler care.

*This is not an exhaustive list of these rich discussions, for more information [please visit this link](#).



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**Looking Ahead: Universal
Preschool Program**

PPLC/PPAG Universal Preschool Discussions

During the preschool policy development process, the [PPLC and PPAG](#) had rich discussions about what a new universal preschool program could look like. They identified the following fundamental cornerstones in designing the new program:

- Ensuring **comprehensive whole child** and developmentally appropriate programming and support for children that is respectful, inviting, and joyful
- Meeting the needs of families, especially working families, by supporting **continuity of care and family choice**
- Elevating, supporting, and respecting the early childhood **workforce**, across formal and informal care settings and ages
- Supporting **evidence and practice-based best practices**, along with innovation so Colorado learns and adapts along the way
- Leading with a **user-centered design mindset**, keeping children, families and providers in the center; making things easy for families and providers and allowing the system to carry the complexity and alignment
- Ensuring real results for children and families by factoring in **quality assessment, accountability, and collection/use of data**
- Balancing **universality with equitably serving** children and families with the greatest level of need

*This is not an exhaustive list of these rich discussions, for more information please visit this [link](#).

PPLC/PPAG Universal Preschool Discussions

Parents and providers elevated the following priorities for the universal preschool program:

- **Equity:** Intentional focus on families and children who have historically faced barriers to accessing quality early care and education.
- **Ease of use:** Parent and provider experiences should be simplified.
- **Mixed delivery and parent choice:** The early care and education system is diverse and families should be able to choose the programs that meet their needs.
- **Birth to 5 systems impact:** Impacts of the universal preschool system on infant and toddler care must be considered.
- **Quality, whole child, developmentally appropriate:** Practices in early childhood should be high quality and developmentally appropriate.
- **Local level solutions:** While some standards should be common statewide, communities should have flexibility for innovation solutions.

*This is not an exhaustive list of these rich discussions, for more information please visit this [link](#).

Legislative Requirements

The TWG is charged to provide recommendations for the universal preschool program and ensure they are aligned with the DEC Transition Report. These recommendations must address:

- Alignment with CPP to create one state-wide preschool program
- Alignment with other EC programs to create a streamlined experience
- Process for calculating funding rates and how the rates are designed to support quality preschool programs and the process for distributing money
- Necessary interagency agreements to define the roles and responsibilities of DEC
- Special education: alignment with federal requirements, identification, & accountability in a mixed delivery environment
- Reduction of duplicative oversight

Legislative Requirements

Recommendations must help to ensure that the new preschool program meets legislative requirements. At a minimum, the new preschool program must:

- Be informed by the analysis of existing EC programs
- Support high-quality preschool programs that implement developmentally and culturally appropriate whole-child, quality learning experiences that support the learning and development of all children
- Be mixed delivery, but with every program meeting fiscal accountability
- Ensure alignment with all state and federal education requirements (ECEA, IDEA)
- Allow for family choice in type of care and education settings
- Establish standards for program quality
- Integrate with existing local EC infrastructure to ensure local coordination
- Be subject to program evaluation on child and family outcomes

TAG Charge on Universal Preschool

TAG will continue to convene to discuss ideas and recommendations for the new statewide, voluntary preschool program to offer the TWG. These ideas and recommendations will take into consideration the ideas and feedback from subgroups, listening sessions, town halls and any other engagement.

Themes to be considered:

Application

Funding flow

Local partnerships

Special Education
service delivery

Eligibility and
prioritization for
funding

Quality and
Evaluation

Mixed delivery

Alignment with
other programs

Initial Idea Generation for UPK

Since the recommendations for the universal preschool program are more interconnected than the transition plan for DEC, TAG will need to consider the entire scope of the program in forthcoming discussions.

To guide these future discussions, a detailed form will be sent out after this meeting to gather initial feedback and ideas. This form is long and open-ended, to provide you with the opportunity to share as much information as possible. The form has a section on CPP, if you would like to know more about this program before filling it out please click [here](#).

The ideas and feedback you give will be integral to the design of the new preschool program, so to allow TAG members time to reflect and share their thoughts, this form will be **open until November 1.**



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Closing/Next Steps

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High Level Timeline for Universal Preschool Report

- **October 20:** TAG members will fill out survey for initial idea generation
- **November 17:** TAG will meet to discuss universal preschool
- **[NEW] December 1:** TAG will meet to discuss universal preschool
- **Week of December 6 (tent.):** Draft universal preschool recommendations will be released
 - A feedback form will be released to the public to offer feedback on the report.
- **December 15:** TAG will meet for the final time and offer feedback on the draft universal preschool recommendations
- All feedback must be received by December 15th, so TWG can finalize the recommendations before the holidays.

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Public Comment