



PROFILES: SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

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| State: | Colorado |
| Partnership name: | Colorado Early Childhood Councils |
| Web site(s): | http://www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/#!early-childhood-councils/ci1v |
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1. Background

Following the Colorado General Assembly's establishment of Consolidated Child Care Pilots in 1996, several communities established coalitions to strengthen local early childhood systems and better serve children birth – age 8. Over time, more communities joined this effort, ultimately leading to legislation (HB07-1062) in 2007 when the Consolidated Child Care Pilots were renamed Early Childhood Councils (ECCs) and expanded from 17 Pilots serving 30 counties to 31 ECCs serving 58 of the 64 counties in Colorado.

2. Mission and Goals

The ultimate goal of ECCs is to improve the quality, access, and equity of services across all four domains of early childhood: (1) early learning; (2) family support and parent education; (3) social, emotional, and mental health; and (4) health by building the foundations of a strong system using the Early Childhood Colorado Framework as a guide. The Framework is available at <http://earlychildhoodcolorado.org/ResourceCenter/tabid/93/ID/235/ECC-Framework.aspx>.



3. Governance and Partnership Members



Each Council defines its own governance structure and must have a fiscal sponsor to receive funding. ECC members include a broad representation of local community stakeholders, including policymakers, business leaders, early childhood professionals, parent consumers, and advocates.

The ECC Leadership Alliance (ECCLA) was established to bring the 31 local councils together to support each other, align efforts, communicate grant management information, provide local input on policy for early childhood, and share expertise and lessons learned about how best to improve the system of

services in Colorado that support young children, their families, and those who work in organizations serving them. ECCLA's purpose has evolved over time to meet the growing focus and technical assistance needs of local ECCs and respond to increased early childhood investment around the State. In 2013, ECCLA became a 501c3 nonprofit membership association with all 31 Councils as members.

4. Funding and Other Resources

Councils currently receive funding on a 3-year grant cycle administered by the State of Colorado's Department of Human Services through its Office of Early Childhood from the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant funds for Quality Improvement. However, this grant does not fully fund Council work. Councils address this shortfall by leveraging funds from other sources and fostering local partnerships to support the building of this early childhood system.

5. Activities

The Councils are a critical piece of early childhood services delivery throughout the State. They focus on advancing programs, resources, and support around early learning; family support and parent education; and social, emotional, and mental health. They work to bring together local partners to improve the quality and availability of early childhood services for children and families in their communities. While not all Councils offer direct services to children and families, they do work with partners in order to ensure that services are available. The Councils work to improve the systems and coordination of services. ECCs develop the internal capacity to do this work by establishing Council governance, building a communication mechanism, developing evaluation and assessment tools, engaging in strategic planning, and developing sustainable resources.

6. Evaluation and Outcomes

The Colorado State Department of Human Services' Office of Early Childhood has recently redefined the program benchmarks as outlined in the following priority goal statements:

1. ECCs will engage in activities to promote transitions of the children in their communities, which includes transitions from infant to toddler classrooms, toddler to Pre-k classrooms, and transition to kindergarten;
2. ECCs will engage in activities to promote family engagement in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems;
3. ECCs will carry out actions to improve the quality rating of all licensed early learning programs in their ECC areas; and
4. ECCs will complete the necessary steps to produce a community profile to be shared with local communities three times in fiscal year 2015.

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