

# Department of Early Childhood 2025 SMART Act Hearing

January 23, 2025  
Joint Education Committee



**COLORADO**

Department of Early Childhood

# OUR MISSION

To ensure the delivery of a comprehensive, community-informed, data-driven, 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.

# OUR VISION

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

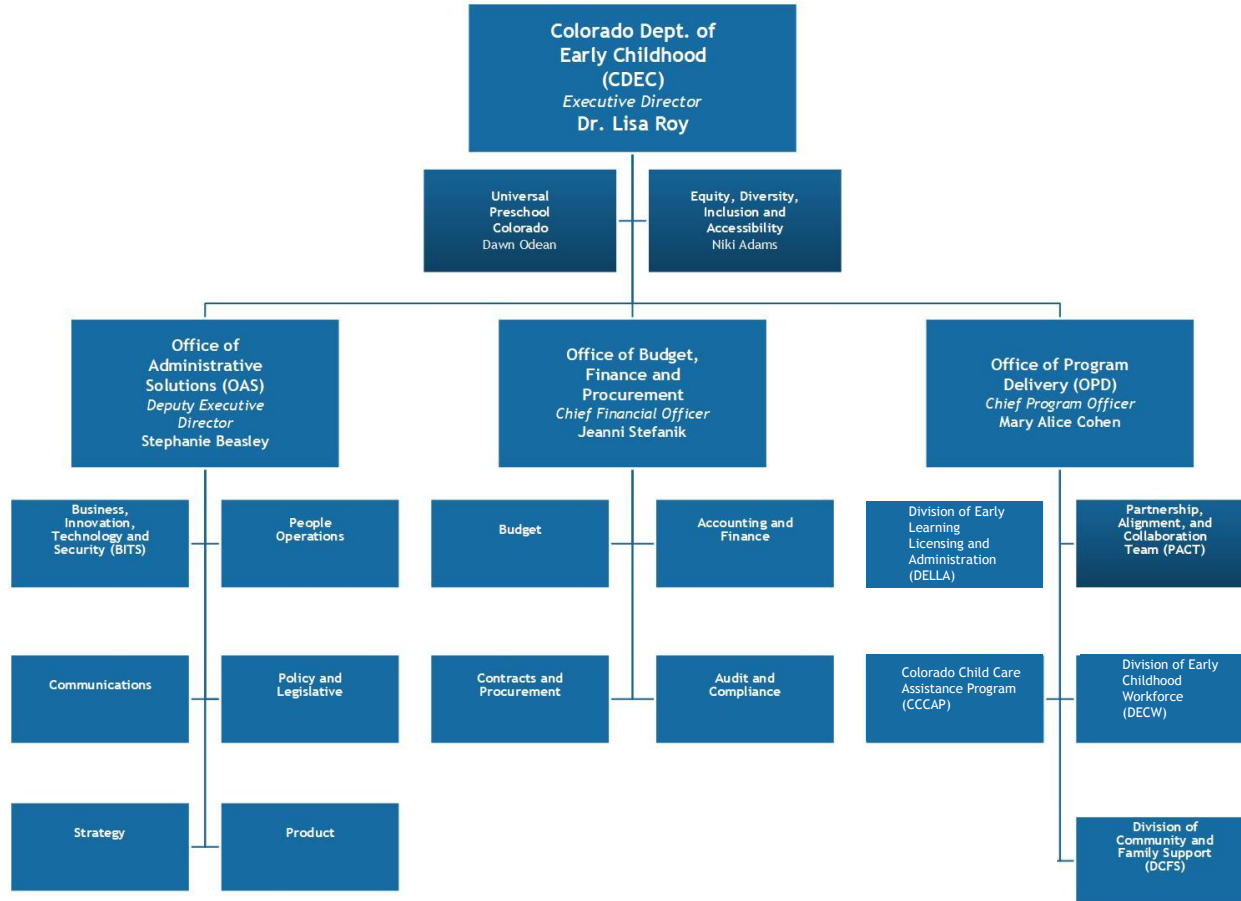
# OUR VALUES

Equity  
Family and Community Focused  
Excellence  
Innovation  
Strengths-Based



**COLORADO**  
Department of Early Childhood

# Organizational Chart

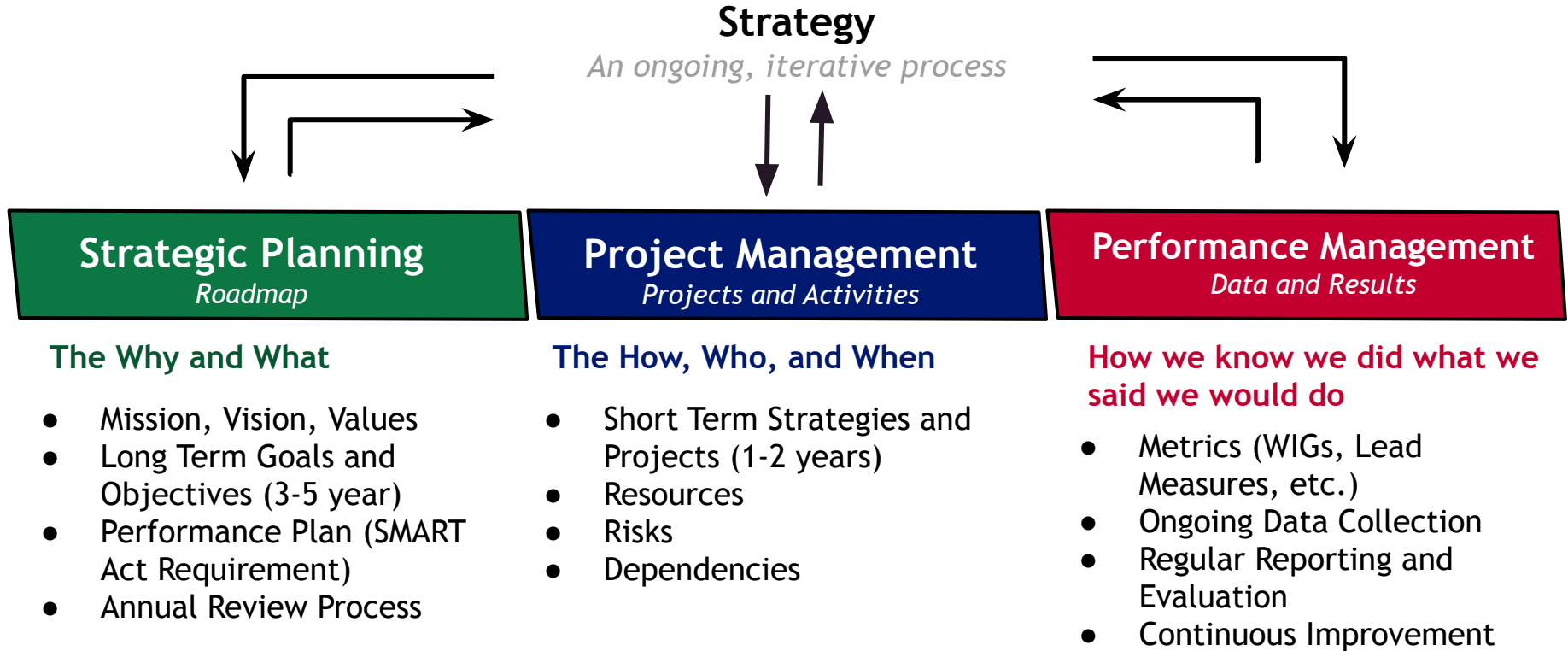


# CDEC Strategic Goals



**Goals 1-3: Mission-Driven Goals:** The work CDEC must accomplish to achieve its mission.  
**Goals 4-7: Foundational Goals:** What CDEC must accomplish to achieve the Mission-Driven goals.

# How CDEC Does Performance Management



# CDEC Wildly Important Goals (WIGs): SFY 2024-2025

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

## WIG #1: Colorado Universal Preschool Program Uptake

Increase the Colorado Universal Preschool uptake rate by 3.5%, going from 69.2% of eligible 4-year-olds in school year 2023-24 to 72.7% in school year 2024-25.

## WIG #2: Colorado Universal Preschool Provider Retention

Retain 94% of Universal Preschool providers from the 2023-2024 school year to the 2024-2025 school year by June 30, 2024.

## WIG #3: School Readiness

Increase the percentage of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores that "meet or exceed expectations" to 75% by June 30, 2027, increasing from 71.3% to 72% in FY 2024-25.

## WIG #4: Child Care Provider Quality

Move 5% of the Colorado Shines eligible child care providers from Level 1 or 2 into high-quality (Levels 3, 4, and 5) each year for three years to go from 1,093 in June 2024 to 1,442 by June 30, 2027.

## WIG #5: Infant-Toddler Child Care Capacity

Increase licensed infant and toddler child care capacity 12.5% over three years, going from 37,564 in July 2024 to 42,260 by June 30, 2027.





## Colorado Universal Preschool

Colorado Universal Preschool was created to ensure every child in Colorado has access to voluntary early care and education services. High-quality preschool is shown to have lifelong benefits.

Colorado Universal Preschool is a state-funded, mixed-delivery preschool program that provides up to 15 hours per week of state-funded preschool to all children in the year before kindergarten. Children with certain qualifying factors and who are low-income may qualify for 30 hours per week. Three-year-olds with certain qualifying factors may also be eligible for 10 hours.

# Universal Preschool: First Year (SY 2023-24) Achievements

## Four-Year-Old Children Served by Award to Family

10 Hour Award	15 Hour Award	30 Hour Award	Total
8,065 (18.5%)	30,586 (70.3%)	4,828 (11.1%)	43,479

## Three-Year-Old Children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) Served by Award to Family

10 Hour Award	15 Hour Award	30 Hour Award	Total
3,673 (62.5%)	1,511 (25.7%)	692 (11.8%)	5,876

## Three-Year-Old Children Served through the Historical Allocation

Total
9,123

\*Districts have the flexibility to use historical allocation funds in various ways, including supplemental funding for children with IEPs. Therefore, some of the children served through the historical allocation may also be included in the three-year-old with IEP count.

- Colorado is projected to rank among the top in the nation for four-year-old preschool access when data is released for SY 2023-24.
- In total, 68.7% of Colorado's estimated eligible four-year-old population statewide received state-funded preschool
  - An increase of 45% compared to SY 2022-23, when 24% of Colorado's estimated four-year-old population was enrolled in the prior targeted, state-funded preschool program.
- Served a significantly greater proportion of four-year-olds compared to national averages. Only 35% of the country's four-year-old population enrolled in state-funded programs in SY 2022-23.



# Universal Preschool: First Year (SY 2023-24) Achievements

## Reaching Children with Unique Needs

- Nearly half (49%) of four-year-olds served were low-income.
- More than 11,000 four-year-olds served had at least one qualifying factor, including having an IEP, being a dual language learner, experiencing homelessness, or in foster care.
- Served more than 5,300 dual language learners and nearly 6,000 students with a disability.

## Lowering Families' Cost of Living

Families saved an average of \$6,100 annually through participation in the program.

## Strengthening the Early Learning Sector

- The program distributed \$239.4 million in provider payments to the early learning sector.
- Offered providers from all settings a reliable pool of public funding and incentivized continued capacity growth.

## Honoring Family Choice through Mixed-Delivery

- More than 1,900 providers participated in the program, including 46% community-based, 38% school-based, and 16% home-based.
- This mixed-delivery approach provides funding to providers of all types and enables families to choose the provider and program that best meets their unique needs.



# WIG 1 - Universal Preschool Program Uptake (1/2)

Increase the Colorado Universal Preschool uptake rate by 3.5%, going from **68.7%** of eligible 4-year-olds in school year 2023-24 to **72.7%** in school year 2024-25.

## Performance Updates

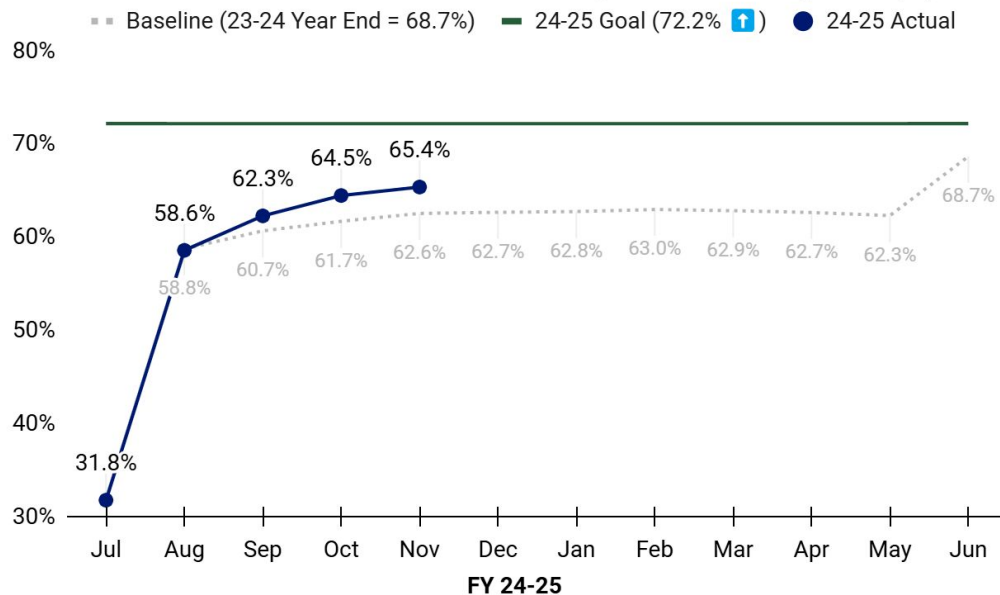
Status: **On Track**.

Progress: As of November 2024, 65.4% of eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in SY 2024-25.

## Background & Context

- This goal will ensure children are prepared for kindergarten, ultimately setting them up for long-term educational success. Increasing uptake will also reduce the gap in school readiness between advantaged and disadvantaged children.
- Additionally, the program will help lower costs for young families, saving them an average of \$614 per month. This financial relief can ease the burden on families, making it more accessible for children to attend preschool and receive the early education they need.

## WIG 1: Colorado Universal Preschool Program Year 2 Uptake (%)



# WIG 1 - Universal Preschool Program Uptake (2/2)

Children Served SY 2024-25, as of December 15th Payment			
	3-Year-Olds	4-Year-Olds	Total
Receiving 10 Hours	2,213	9,145	11,358
Receiving 15 Hours	1,385	23,536	24,921
Receiving 30 Hours	2	8,925	8,927
Total	3,600	41,606	45,206

## New “Children in Poverty” Qualifying Factor

- Enables children living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines to receive 30 hours of state-funded preschool.
- Already, more than 6,000 children who are experiencing poverty are receiving full-day services.

## New Enrollment Supports

- Launched enrollment supports that meet the unique needs of families, including targeted processes for students with IEPs and families needing to continue care with a current provider.
- The family application is available in 11 languages.

## Matching Success

- 94.1% of families were matched to their 1st or 2nd choice.

More than 10,800 families have begun registering for a transformational 2025-26 school year.

*“My son learned so much and came so far socially this year. I am beyond grateful for this program. My family would never have been able to afford it, otherwise. I feel that my little one is better prepared for kindergarten now. Thank you, thank you for this special learning for our children.”*

- *Billi Kennedy, parent*



# WIG 2 - Universal Preschool Provider Retention (1/2)

Retain **95%** of the SY 2024-25 Universal Preschool Program providers in SY 2025-26 by June 30, 2025.

## Performance Updates

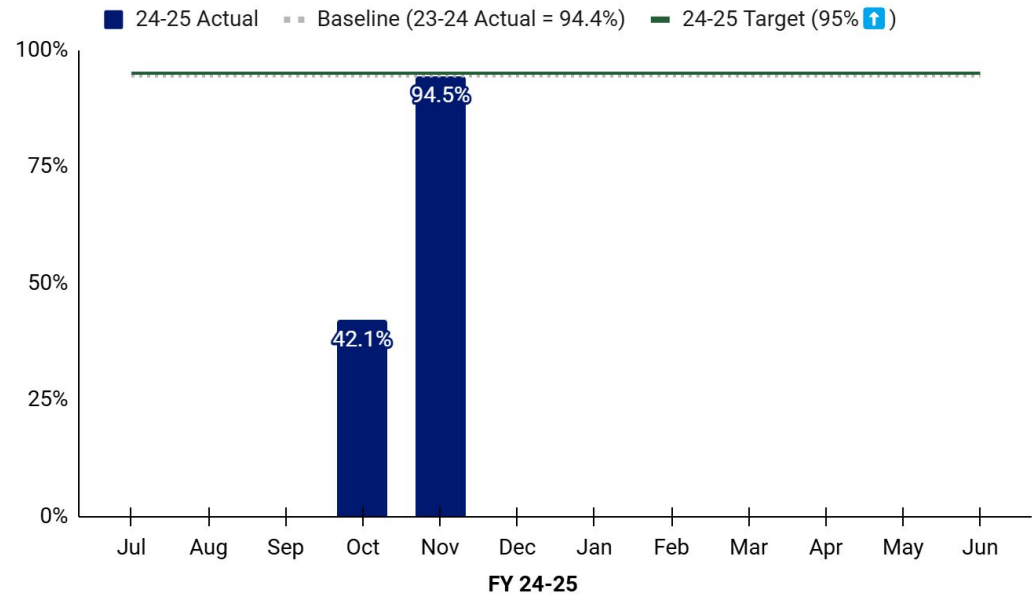
Status: **On Track.**

**Progress:** As of November 2024, 1,978 (94.5%) of the 2,094 UPK providers who participated in SY 24-25 completed a SY 25-26 Provider Set-Up Form. This is only 12 away from meeting the 95% retention goal (1,990).

## Background & Context

- Retaining program providers year to year is critical to meeting the growing demand for preschool services and addressing the school readiness gap between historically advantaged and disadvantaged communities.
- Data is available starting October 2024 because provider registration for SY 2025-26 began the week of 10/14/2024.

WIG 2: Colorado Universal Preschool Program Provider Retention (%)



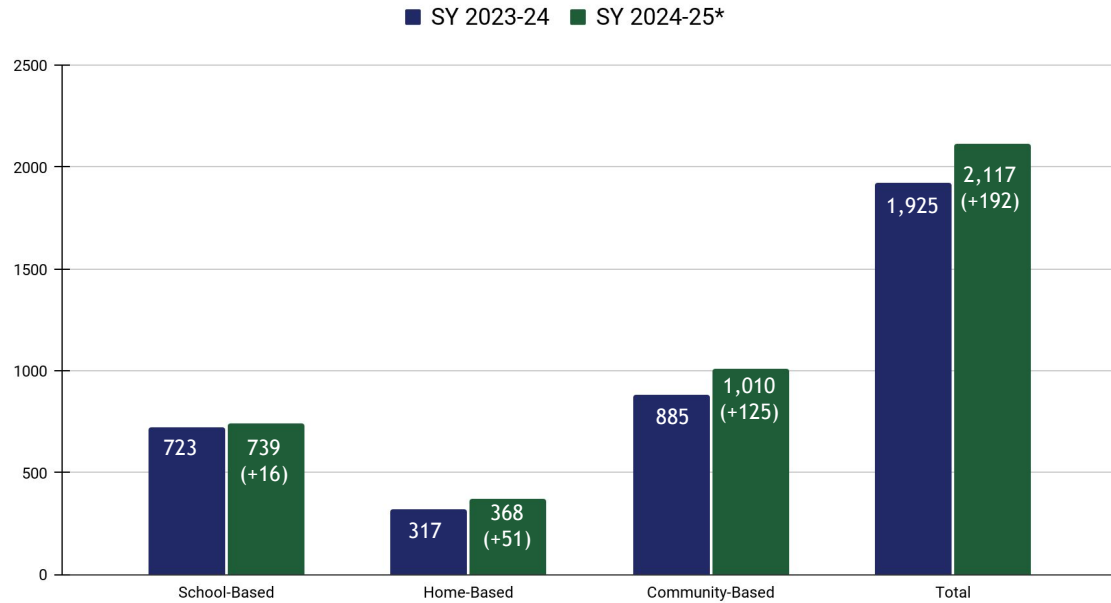
More than 2,000 provider are serving children in school year 2024-25.

*“Colorado Universal Preschool has allowed me to be competitive and to have the funding I need so I can pass that benefit on for the family. It has also helped me to afford to stay in the family child care business.”*

- *Academy de la Estrella, a dual language preschool in Garfield County*



# WIG 2 - Universal Preschool Provider Retention (2/2)



\*Providers with published profiles on the family application, as of 12/19/2024.

## SY 2025-26 Provider Registration

- Simplified the provider registration process with user-friendly forms and dedicated registration support.
- Support through Local Coordinating Organizations (LCOs) to focus on retaining providers in counties with low-capacity.

# WIG 3 - School Readiness (1/3)



*Increase the percentage of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores that "meet or exceed expectations" to **75%** by June 30, 2027, increasing from **71.3%** to 72% in FY 2024-25.*

## Performance Updates

**Progress:** Data will be available in Spring 2025.

## Background & Context

- This goal will ensure that more children are prepared for school and equipped with essential skills.
- School readiness is defined as the ability of a child to successfully engage in and benefit from early learning experiences.
- A Kindergarten Readiness Assessment is used to evaluate school readiness through multiple domains, including academic skills, social-emotional development, and physical well-being.





## Quality Standards

- Quality Standards rules will be phased in over multiple years to support providers in implementing standards and to respond to providers' quality improvement needs.
- Standards will ensure programs have the instructional practices, developmental supports, family engagement, and teacher development needed to create positive child outcomes.
- Developing Learning Goals that create clear expectations for what children should know and be able to do by the end of their preschool year.

## Kindergarten Transitions

- Collaboration with CDE to build strong bridges between preschool and kindergarten.
- Ensuring systems alignment, professional development for teachers, and family supports that will create smooth transitions for children.



# Colorado Universal Preschool Evaluation

The program is undergoing a multi-year, statutorily-required independent evaluation aligned with its maturity on the Colorado “Steps to Building Evidence” model, to be concluded in 2027.

The evaluation will focus on:

1. **Implementation:** Evaluate current implementation practices, such as matching, data collection, and provider and family reach.
2. **Early Learning:** Assessing Quality Standards and Learning Goals
3. **Blending and Braiding:** Develop a model for blending and braiding public funding to support families in accessing early care and education.



## Colorado Child Care Assistance Program

Provides high quality, affordable child care for low-income families who are working, seeking work, or pursuing education, thereby promoting household self-sufficiency.

## Division of Early Learning, Licensing, and Administration

Leads in planning and implementing public child care policy in compliance with federal and state regulations. Responsible for licensing and monitoring more than 4,800 child care facilities in Colorado.

## Division of Early Childhood Workforce

Leads in honoring, professionalizing, and growing early care and education professionals to ensure we recruit and retain a diverse, well-compensated, highly competent, and thriving workforce.

## Division of Community and Family Support

Provides families and communities with the resources needed to support young children to thrive, including home visiting, early childhood mental health, early intervention, and family strengthening.

# Office of Program Delivery



# Division of Community and Family Support

Delivers programs that focus on meeting young children's needs in the places that they spend their time, beyond child care and preschool.

## Early Intervention

Provides developmental support and services for children from birth through two years of age who are referred due to a suspected developmental delay or disability.

## Family Strengthening

Administers home visiting and family support programs focused on building protective factors among children, families and communities.

## Early Childhood Mental Health

Strengthens adult-child relationships and engages families and child care providers in children's learning and development.

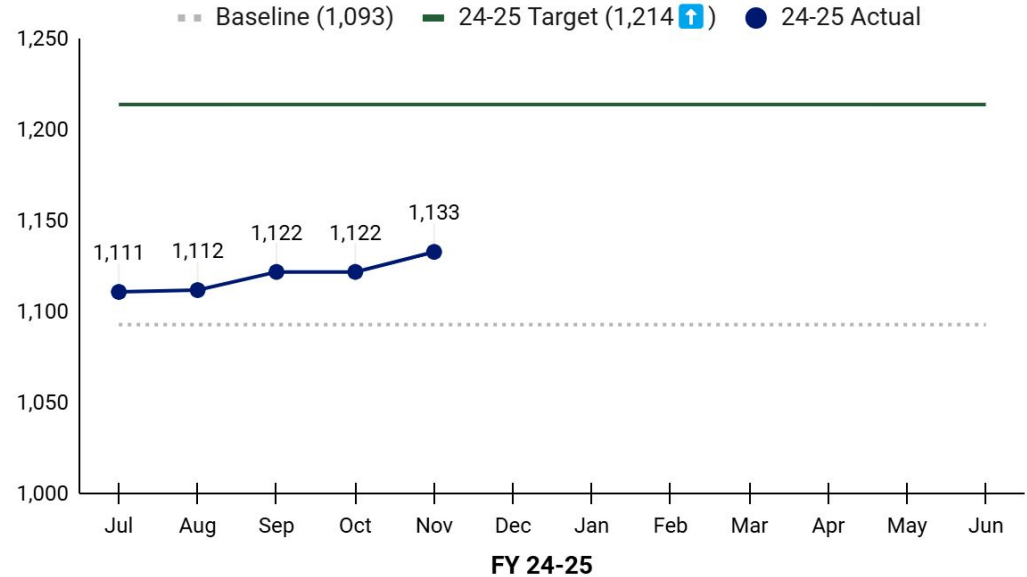
# WIG 4 - Child Care Provider Quality (1/2)

Move 5% of the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) eligible child care providers from Level 1 or 2 into high-quality (Levels 3, 4, and 5) each year for three years starting in FY 2024-25 to go from 1,093 in June 2024 to 1,442 by June 30, 2027.

## Background & Context

- This goal will improve the quality of child care in Colorado, expand access to better learning environments, and prepare more children for long-term success in school and life.
- By elevating the quality of licensed child care providers, more children will have access to enriched learning environments that foster essential cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development skills.
- Providers achieving higher levels in the QRIS offer structured curricula, supportive interactions, and stimulating activities that better prepare children for kindergarten and beyond.

## WIG 4: Child Care Provider Quality (#)



# WIG 4 - Child Care Provider Quality (2/2)



## Early Childhood Councils

Local entities that increase and sustain the quality, accessibility, capacity, and affordability of early childhood services.

- Develop strategic plans specific to their community
- Support local providers to pursue continuous quality improvement
- Connect and empower families to access services
- Build community capacity and encourage public-private partnerships

## Quality Improvement Incentive Program

- Quality improvement incentives and supports are intended to help support the costs to improve and maintain program quality.
- Providers receive funding to implement a quality improvement plan over 18 months, receiving support from Quality Improvement Navigators and Coaches.
- Improvement strategies include:
  - Coaching
  - Professional development
  - Materials for quality learning environment

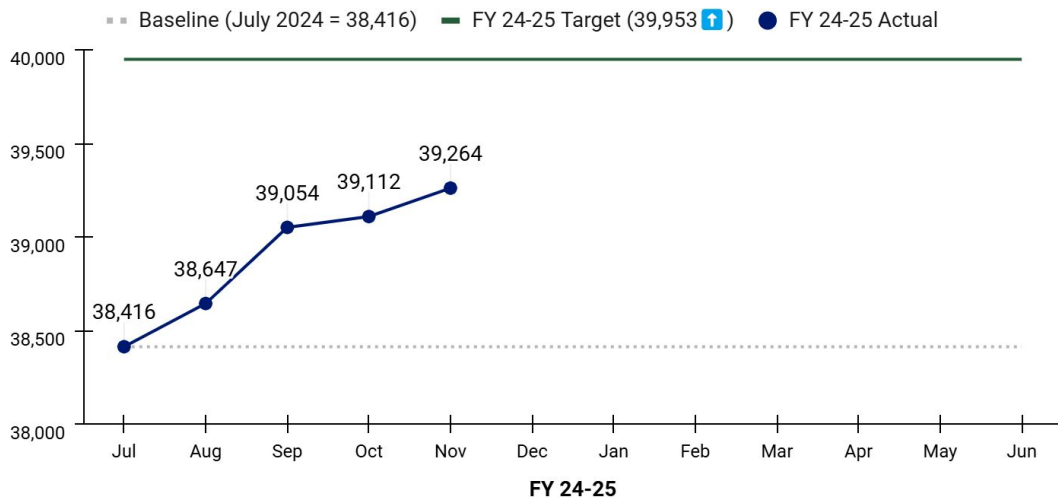
# WIG 5 - Infant - Toddler Child Care Capacity (1/4)

Increase licensed infant and toddler child care capacity 12.5% over three years, going from 37,564 in July 2024 to 42,260 by June 30, 2027.

## Background & Context

- This goal will address the pressing need for more accessible, high-quality infant and toddler child care.
- CDEC is focusing on reducing provider churn, increasing the workforce, improving language accessibility, and formalizing informal care through Family, Friend, and Neighbor registration.
- Strengthening the existing system and expanding access will create a more stable, inclusive, and comprehensive child care landscape.

**WIG 5: Increase Infant and Toddler Child Care Capacity**



# WIG 5 - Infant - Toddler Child Care Capacity (2/4)

## Division of Early Childhood Workforce



## Comprehensive Early Childhood Workforce Plan

A comprehensive, statewide plan to address the immediate priorities of professionals working on behalf of young children and families and to respond to the evolving needs of the early childhood workforce:

- Enhance professional development
- Increase workforce diversity
- Improve compensation
- Foster collaboration
- Address data gaps

## Expanding Quality in Infant and Toddler Care

An evidence-based professional development course designed for center- and home-based child care providers intended to increase the quality and availability of responsive care for infants and toddlers.

- Provides strengths-based, job-embedded coaching to providers
- A “foundational” class that supports participants to see themselves as professionals, empowering many to move on to take additional early education courses.





## Increasing Licensed Spanish-Speaking Child Care Providers

CDEC's Bilingual Licensing Unit provides Spanish licensing support to child care providers, expanding linguistically responsive child care capacity throughout the state.

## Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Support

- Legislatively-mandated FFN Advisory Council that advises on regulations, policies, funding, and procedures
- FFN provider registration in the Professional Development Information System enables access to professional development and eligibility for the Careworkers Tax Credit





## Colorado Child Care Assistance Program

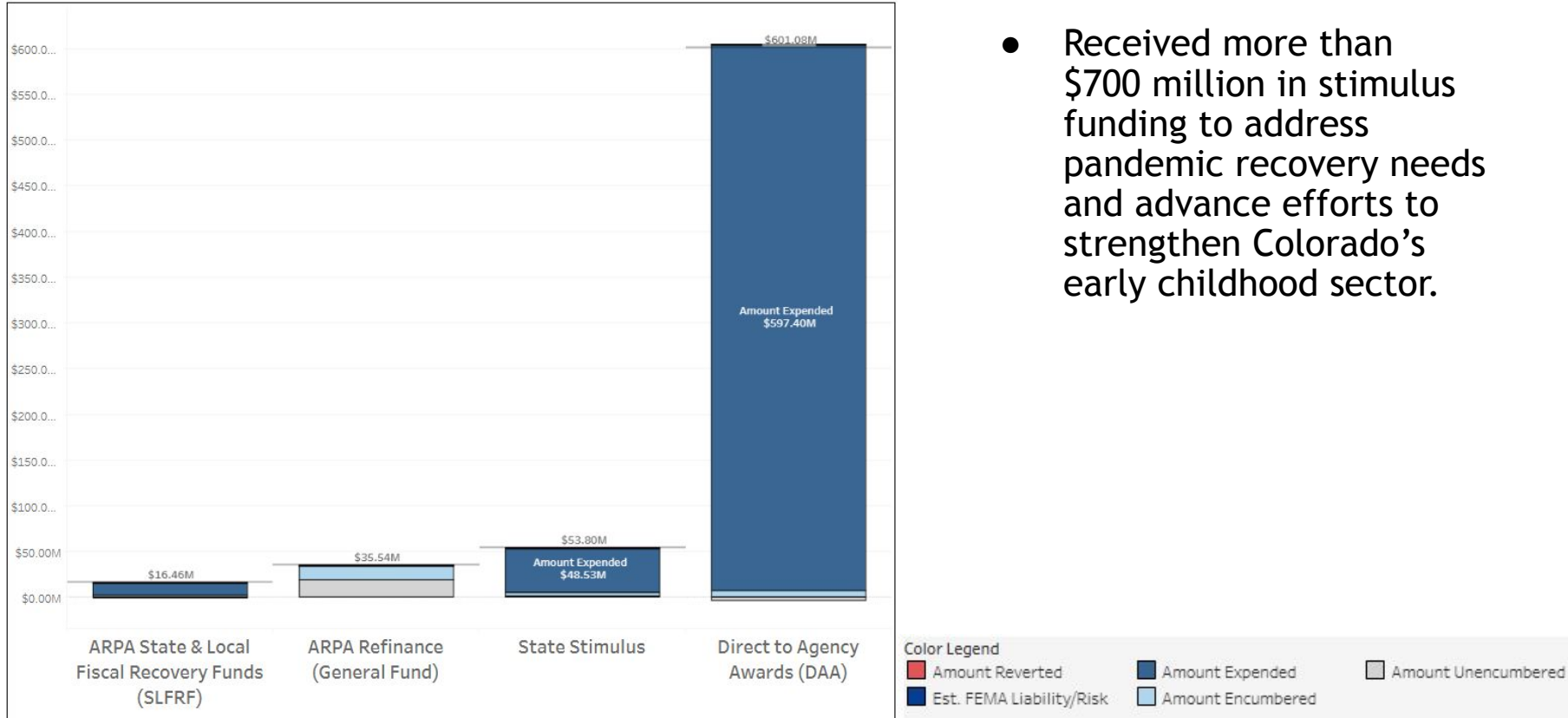
Provides eligible households with access to high-quality, affordable child care that supports healthy development and school readiness while promoting household self-sufficiency and informed child care choices. In FY 2023-24, served 30,124 children birth through age 12 through 2,566 licensed providers. This included nearly 14,500 infants and toddlers.

Performance is measured by the number of children served and in high quality care, as well as the cost to families. CDEC is mandated to implement new federal rules to improve child care access, affordability, and the stability of the child care sector.

*The implications of these changes are complex.*

- The changes will lower families' child care costs and improve provider stability and wages.
- However, Colorado will be required to spend more per child and serve less children; counties will be in a difficult financial position.

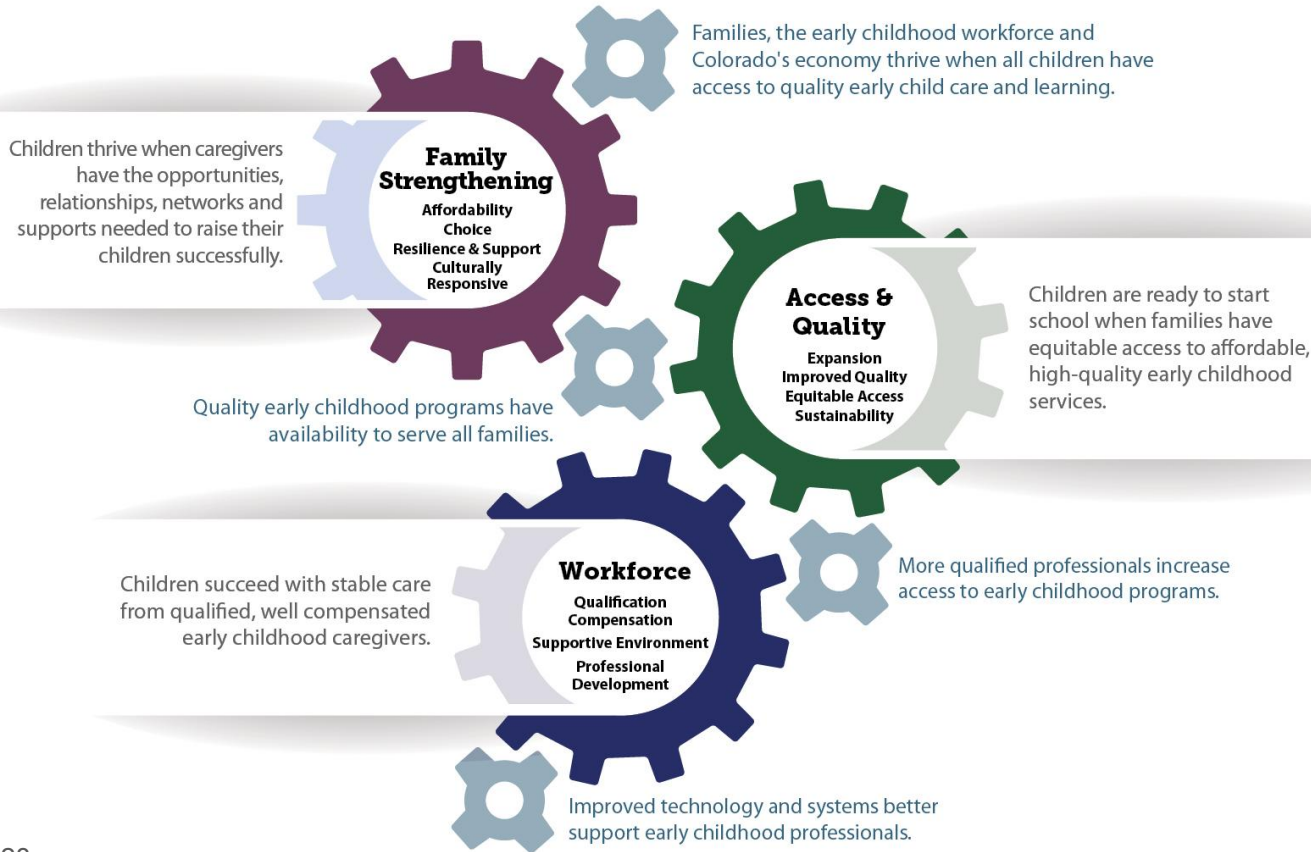
# Stimulus Funding Implementation



Quarterly updates can be viewed at: <https://coforward.colorado.gov>

# Strengthening Colorado's Early Childhood Sector

## Stimulus Funded Activities

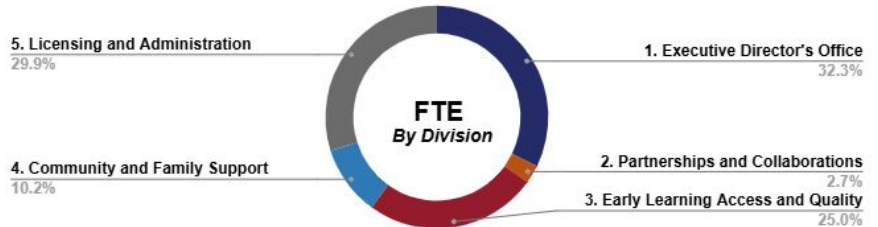
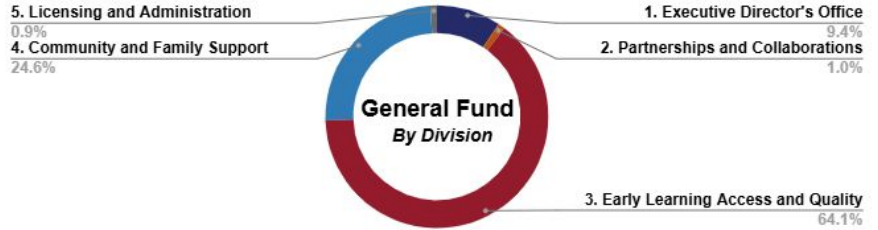
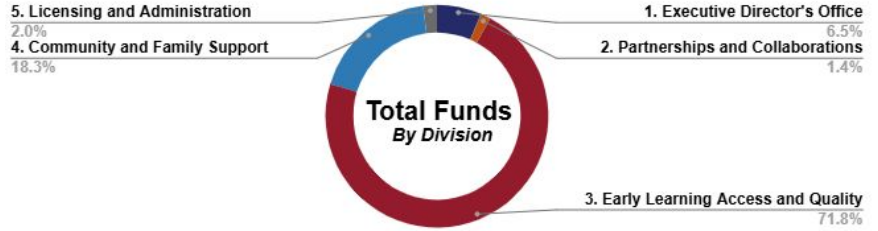


- Worked with providers, families, and stakeholders to identify key priorities.
- Developed 45 stimulus-funded activities in three mission-driven areas.
- Developed evidence evaluations for 22 of the strategies which demonstrate positive impact

# CDEC FY 2025-26 Budget Request

## FY 2025-26 Budget Request Snapshot

FY 2025-26 Total Funds: \$38,824,887  
 FY 2025-26 General Fund: \$16,662,902  
 FY 2025-26 FTE: 1.5



# CDEC FY 2025-26 Budget Priorities



- \$21.5M in funding for Colorado Child Care Assistance Program support and \$1.8M for IT Capital
- \$11M for Colorado Universal Preschool student enrollment, provider rate increases, and Local Coordinating Organization funding
- \$206,488 for a Language Justice Coordinator to support linguistically responsive access initiatives



- \$210,000 for Expanding Quality for Infant and Toddler Trainers to expand the quality and availability of responsive care for infants and toddlers and better support infant and toddler educators



- \$3.6M to support meet its federal maintenance of effort requirements and serve the growing caseload in the Early Intervention Program
- \$712,000 to increase spending authority for the Colorado Child Abuse Prevention Trust Fund to expand child maltreatment prevention efforts

# Additional Non-Appropriated Federal Funds

Federal Grant Program	FFY 2025 Award	Purpose	Statutory Authority
Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Grant	\$9,091,527	Supports pregnant people/parents who live in communities that face greater risks and barriers to achieving positive maternal and child health outcomes.	42 USC § 711(C)
Head Start Collaboration Grant	\$125,000	For Head Start entities that carry out activities designed to benefit low-income children from birth to school entry, and their families.	42 USC 9801 ET SEQ
Family Support through Primary Prevention (FSPP) Grant	\$750,000	Reduce child maltreatment and improve family well-being for Colorado families ages prenatal to 5	42 USC 5101, Sec. 106(a)
Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (FIRE) Grant	\$1,495,808	For fathers to sustain healthy relationships, work toward financial well-being, and reinforce responsible parenting through skills-based parent and co-parent education workshops.	Section 403(a)(2) of SSA Act 42 USC § 603a2
Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS): Health Integration P-5	\$299,600	Build integrated maternal and early childhood systems of care that are equitable, sustainable, comprehensive, and inclusive of the health system.	Title V § 501(a)(3)(C) of Social Security Act; 42 U.S.C. § 701(a)(3)
Retention/ Recruitment of Early Intervention Professionals	\$70,826	Recruitment of EI direct service providers and provide professional development opportunities for existing providers.	2 CFR PART 180
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,832,761</b>		



# Office of Administrative Solutions

**Division of People  
Operations**

**Product Unit**

**Policy & Legislative Unit**

**Business, Innovation,  
Technology & Security**

**Communications Unit**

**Strategy Unit**



# Regulatory Agenda



## Report of Rules Promulgated in 2024

Emergency Adoptions  
5

Permanent Adoptions  
12

## Anticipated Rules for Promulgation in 2025

Proposed New/Revised Rules  
4

Comprehensive Rule Reviews  
3



# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Dedicated Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Team that leads efforts in ensuring equitable access and resources
- Creation of five-year Language Justice Plan
  - Expanding language offerings for professional development courses to include Arabic
  - Translation of all licensing materials into Spanish
  - Early Childhood Mental Health Support Line available in more than 200 languages



# Independent Evaluation

Independent evaluation of CDEC's performance in executing functions, operating programs and services, and building an efficient, comprehensive early childhood system.

Evaluation to be completed by November 1, 2025



A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a purple shirt and a necklace, is sitting at a table in a classroom, reading a large, colorful book. Several young children are sitting around the table, looking at the book. The classroom background shows shelves with books and a clock on the wall. The text "THANK YOU. Questions?" is overlaid on the image in white and yellow. The word "THANK YOU." is in white, and "Questions?" is in yellow. The text is framed by white L-shaped brackets.

THANK YOU.  
Questions?

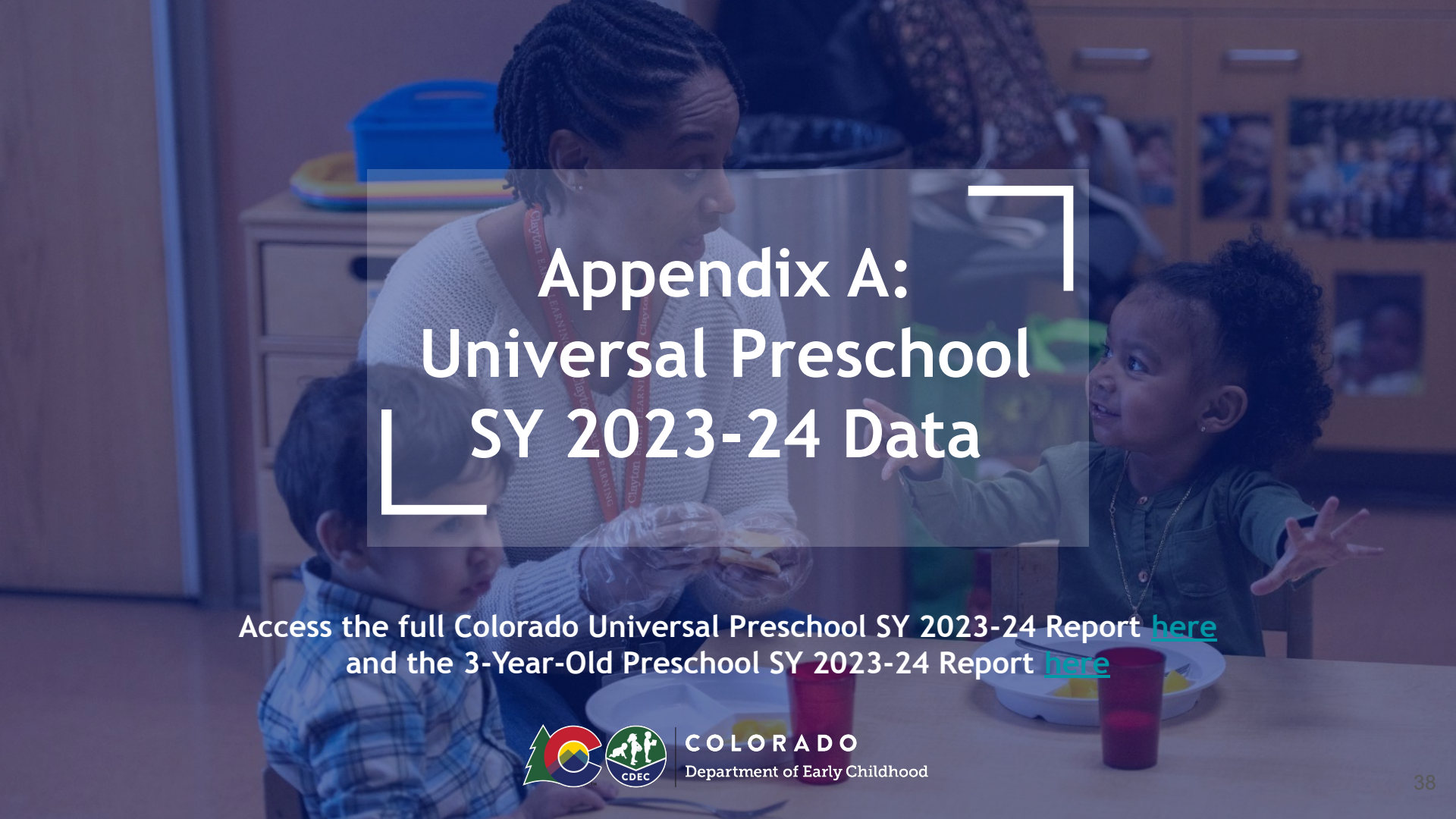


COLORADO  
Department of Early Childhood

# More Information

To view monthly updates on Wildly Important Goals and corresponding lead measures, please visit the [Governor's Dashboard](#).

For more information on additional Department goals and context, view our [FY 2023-24 Performance Plan](#).



# Appendix A: Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Data

Access the full Colorado Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Report [here](#)  
and the 3-Year-Old Preschool SY 2023-24 Report [here](#)



**COLORADO**  
Department of Early Childhood

# Appendix A: Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Data

## Children Served by Income

- Nearly half (21,506, or 49.5%) of children who received services through Colorado Universal Preschool were “low-income” at any point in the program year.
  - Low-income is defined as families earning less than 270% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
- With families saving an average of \$600 a month, or \$6,100 annually, through participation in Colorado Universal Preschool, the program helps promote family stability, lower families’ cost of living, and free-up earnings for other needs – whether this be housing, food, healthcare, or savings.

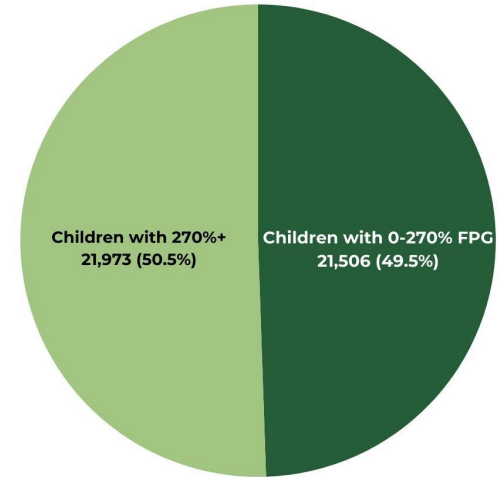


Figure 2: Children Served by Income Band

# Appendix A: Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Data

## Children Served by Qualifying Factors

Figure 6: Number of Children Served with Each Qualifying Factor

Qualifying Factor	Number of Children
Child with IEP	5,863 (13.5%)
Dual Language Learner	5,388 (12.4%)
Homeless	716 (1.6%)
In Foster Care	657 (1.5%)

\* Counts are unique for each category of qualifying factor; counts are not unique across qualifying factors. Children with multiple qualifying factors are counted in each category.

- Colorado Universal Preschool served more than 11,000 unique children (26.4%) with a qualifying factor, regardless of income, at any point during school year 2023-24.
- The program serves many families with compounding qualifying factors: 1,076 children had two qualifying factors, and 44 children had three or more qualifying factors.
- Of the four qualifying factors, the most common were “child with an IEP,” followed by “dual language learner” status. More than 5,800 and 5,300 children met these criteria, respectively.



# Appendix A: Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Data

## Children Served by Race/Ethnicity

Child race and ethnicity data is collected through the family application. In the first year of the program, these application fields were optional for families. Only 70% of families served reported race in their application, and 80% of families reported ethnicity. Therefore, SY 2023-24 racial and ethnic data is only partially reflective of the true demographics. The application has been updated for SY 2024-25 to ensure the collection of complete demographic data.

Figure 2: Number of Children Served by Race

Race	Grand Total	Percentage of Total Children Served
Asian or Pacific Islander	1,801	4.1%
Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial	3,026	7.0%
Black or African American	2,636	6.1%
Native American	478	1.1%
White	21,661	49.8%
Something Else*	620	1.4%
Unspecified**	13,257	30.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>43,479</b>	

\*Families had the option of selecting “Something Else”, if their racial identity was not an option.

\*\*This category includes families who selected “Prefer Not to Answer” or who left the question answered.

Figure 3: Number of Children Served by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Grand Total	Percentage of Total Children Served
Hispanic	11,972	27.5%
Non-Hispanic	22,404	51.5%
Unspecified*	9,103	20.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>43,479</b>	

\*This category includes families who selected “Prefer Not to Answer” or who left the question answered.

# Appendix: Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Data

Figure 4 : Primary Languages Spoken by Children Served

Primary Language	Percent of Total 4 Year Olds Served
English	88.5%
Spanish	7.8%
Other	1.7%
Bilingual/Multilingual	0.6%
Chinese	0.3%
Amharic	0.2%
Arabic	0.2%
Russian	0.2%
Vietnamese	0.2%
French	0.1%
Somali	0.1%
German	>0.1%
Korean	>0.1%
Tagalog	>0.1%

## Children Served by Primary Language

- Within the application, families also indicated if their child had limited English proficiency. If so, families then stated the primary language spoken at home.
- In SY 2023-24, 88.5% of families primarily spoke English in the home, 7.8% of families primarily spoke Spanish, 3.1% of families primarily spoke another language, and less than one percent of families indicated multiple primary languages.

# Appendix: Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Data

## Providers in the Mixed-Delivery System

Figure 5 : Number of Providers by Setting

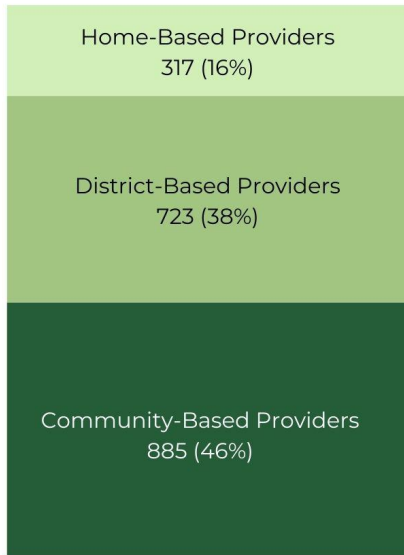
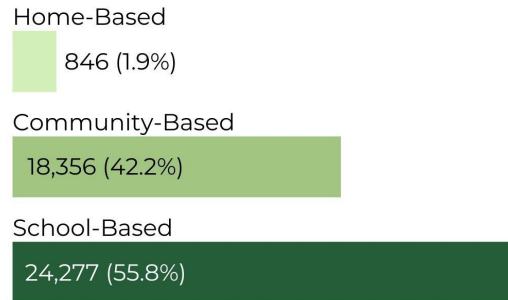


Figure 6: Children Served by Provider Setting\*



\*Families have the ability to change their preschool provider at any point throughout the program year. This data reflects the number of children served by provider setting during the last month of SY 2023-24.

By offering equitable access to state funding and operational support for all preschool provider types, Colorado Universal Preschool’s mixed-delivery model addresses some of the most challenging issues families face in accessing and affording quality early care and education.

# Appendix: Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Data

## Rates and Expenditures

Figure 7: Average Hourly Rates

10 hour rate	15 hour rate	30 hour rate
\$4,837.46	\$6,044.37	\$10,655.45

Figure 8: Expenditures by Award\* to Family

Award Hours*	Children Served	Expenditures
10 Hour	8,065	\$40,399,283
15 Hour	30,586	\$160,543,880
30 Hour	4,828	\$38,491,679
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,479</b>	<b>\$239,434,843*</b>

\*Children Served shows the total number of unique children by the highest award they received. For example, a child who received a 10 hour award and a 15 hour award throughout the program year would only be counted in the 15 Hour total in this table. Totals of children served per award hour cannot be used to calculate Expenditures, as students may have changed award type throughout the year.

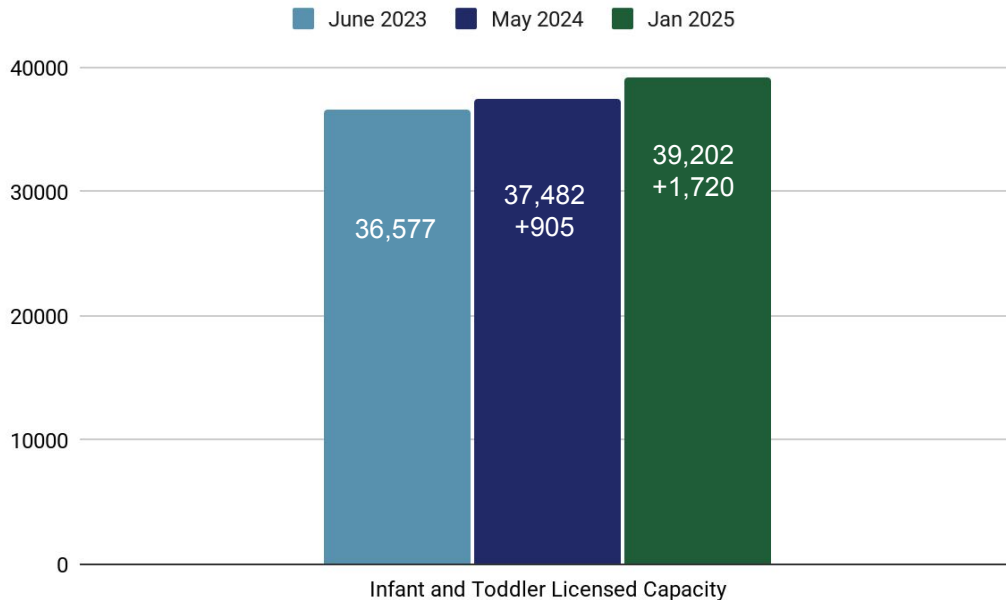
# Appendix: Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Data

Figure 9: Expenditures by Statutory Purpose and Percentage of Appropriation

Statutory Purpose	Expenditure	Percentage of Appropriation
“Universal Preschool Services” (10 hours for 4 Year Olds)	\$19,384,128	13% of Preschool Program Cash Fund
Specified Purposes Pursuant to 26.5-4-208(1)(d) (15 hours for 4 Year Olds)	\$26,983,407	50% of Preschool Program Cash Fund
“Additional Preschool Services”	\$18,468,833	12% of Preschool Program Cash Fund
Preschool services for children with disabilities	\$26,983,407	17% of Preschool Program Cash Fund
Preschool services for 3-Year-Olds and younger	\$18,658,650	12% of Preschool Program Cash Fund
Admin expenses for the Department and Local Coordinating Organizations	\$635,000	100% of operating appropriation

# Appendix: Universal Preschool SY 2023-24 Data

## Changes in Infant/Toddler Capacity After Implementation of Universal Preschool



Infant and toddler capacity has increased by 2,625 slots since Colorado Universal Preschool was authorized in statute.

# Appendix B: Online Kindergarten Readiness Pilot

## Purpose:

The Online Kindergarten Readiness Pilot was codified in statute to

- (1) Require CDEC to explore family and provider interest in participating in online reading, mathematics, and science support for children in the year before kindergarten.
- (2) Allow CDEC to contract with a provider to deliver an online kindergarten readiness program

## Outcome:

- Issued survey to 417 families
  - One quarter of families reported interest in a hybrid preschool option, particularly for health compromised children
  - 40%, or 53 families, shared concerns such as ability to work, whether online programming is developmentally appropriate, and ability to serve children with disabilities.
- Barriers:
  - Only licensed providers can participate in Universal Preschool, and there is no license for online-only providers
- Solution:
  - Licensed providers have the option of creating online or hybrid programming
  - Currently, no providers have pursued this option



# 2025 SMART Act Hearing



# WHO WE ARE

- Colorado's federally recognized **STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL** on Early Childhood
- Created in 2010; **REAUTHORIZED** by HB22-1295 until 2025

## § 26.5-1-302 EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP COMMISSION - MISSION

(1) There is created in the state department the early childhood leadership commission. The purpose of the commission is to ensure and advance a **comprehensive service delivery system for pregnant women and children from birth to eight years of age** using data to improve decision-making, alignment, and coordination among federally funded and state-funded services and programs for pregnant women and young children and their families.

At a minimum, the comprehensive service delivery system for pregnant women and children must include services in the areas of **prenatal health, child health, child mental health, early learning, and family support and parent education.**

PARENTS

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

PROVIDERS

PUBLIC HEALTH

FOUNDATIONS

HEALTH

HEAD START

BUSINESS

WHO WE ARE

21 Members  
including  
6 STATE  
AGENCIES

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



*Early Childhood Leadership Commission*

**Co-Chairs:**  
Sue Renner  
Happy Haynes  
Michael Cooke

## **Program Quality, Alignment & Access Subcommittee**

Pamela Harris  
Kacee Miller  
Lisa Schlueter

## **Data Subcommittee**

Carsten Baumann  
Susan Steele

## **Workforce Development Subcommittee**

Jennifer O'Brien  
Paula Smith  
Susan Steele  
Sam Fogleman

**Home Visiting  
Investment Strategy  
Working Group**

**Early Childhood  
Comprehensive  
Systems Working Group**

**Infant and Early  
Childhood Mental  
Health Advisory Council**

# ECLC 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



Colorado is successful in administering a **comprehensive early childhood system** 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 a broad range of quality services, programs, and supports for young 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 young children and families.*



# PROMOTED THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COLORADO FRAMEWORK

## Early Childhood Colorado Framework

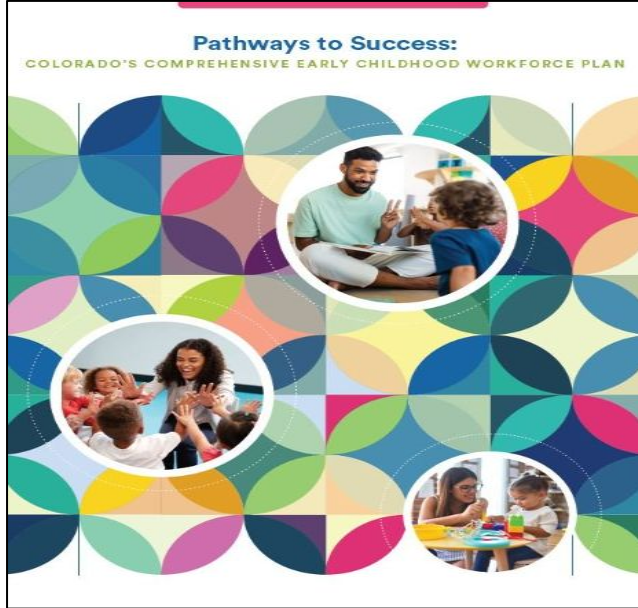
A SHARED VISION

For more information visit [earlychildhoodframework.org](http://earlychildhoodframework.org)

If WE BELIEVE	And BUILD A STRONG SYSTEM	It WILL LEAD TO	The FUTURE OF COLORADO
 <p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; color: white;">PRINCIPLES</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; color: white;">Equity Driven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All Children Served</li> <li>● Child, Family, and Community Centered</li> <li>● Holistic Services Approach</li> <li>● Thriving, Effective Workforce</li> <li>● Mixed Delivery System</li> <li>● High Quality Standards</li> <li>● Innovation</li> <li>● Streamlined Efficiency</li> <li>● Data-Driven, Outcomes-Focused Decisions</li> <li>● Accountability</li> </ul>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; color: white;">EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-size: 0.7em;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>Comprehensive services to fully support the healthy bodies and minds of children and their families.</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>Early care and education that nurtures children's physical, social-emotional, and intellectual growth.</p> </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-size: 0.7em;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>Resources and networks that support families as their child's first caregiver and most important teacher.</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>Environment that fosters economic success so that all the essential needs of children, families, and the workforce are met.</p> </div> </div> <div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">WORKFORCE</div> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Early childhood professionals who are diverse, equitably compensated, and prepared to serve in the many settings involved in child health, development, and education.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-size: 0.7em;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p><b>LEADERSHIP</b> A strong leadership network of leaders to make timely and responsive decisions about programs and policies.</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p><b>FUNDING</b> Adequate resources to fully meet the needs of children, families, and communities.</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p><b>DATA &amp; RESEARCH</b> Information to better understand the early childhood system and plan future actions that lead to improved, sustainable, and more equitable outcomes.</p> </div> </div> <div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">COLLABORATION</div> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">All elements working together—in local communities to the state level—toward a shared vision for all of Colorado's young children.</p>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold;">OUTCOMES</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Access</p> </div> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">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.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Quality</p> </div> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Every young child and family experiences a high-quality environment that supports all areas of well-being, affirms all aspects of their identity, and leads to equitable opportunities.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Alignment</p> </div> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">All the components of the early childhood system are aligned and coordinated so families are able to easily identify, navigate, and receive services.</p>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; color: white;">VISION</p> <div style="background-color: #f9a825; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">             ALL CHILDREN ARE VALUED, HEALTHY, AND THRIVING         </div> <div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">IMPACT</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div>

[www.EarlyChildhoodFramework.org](http://www.EarlyChildhoodFramework.org)

# REPORTS ENDORSED BY ECLC IN 2024



[Pathways to Success: Colorado's Comprehensive Early Childhood Workforce Plan](#)  
(Also in [Spanish](#) and [Arabic](#))



[Full Strategic Plan \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Strategies At-a-Glance \(Spanish\)](#)

# LOOKING FORWARD

- ❖ Support the implementation of the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* and *Elevating Early Childhood and Pathways to Success*
- ❖ Elevate innovative policy strategies and funding opportunities to advance the Statewide Comprehensive Early Childhood Workforce Plan
- ❖ Create mechanism to increase collaboration between state agencies working on early childhood
- ❖ Regularly elevate recommendations to increase the amount and equitable use of public and private investments in early childhood
- ❖ Advocate for an aligned, effective, resourced, and data-driven mixed-delivery early childhood system



# THANK YOU!



For more information:

[www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org](http://www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org)

Shannon Wilson

[shannonm.wilson@state.co.us](mailto:shannonm.wilson@state.co.us)

720-603-3460

