



Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Early Childhood & School Readiness
Legislative Commission
August 10, 2021

WHO WE ARE

- Colorado's **STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL** on Early Childhood
- Created in 2010; **REAUTHORIZED** by HB17-1106 until 2023

§ 26-6.2-103. Early childhood leadership commission - created - 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

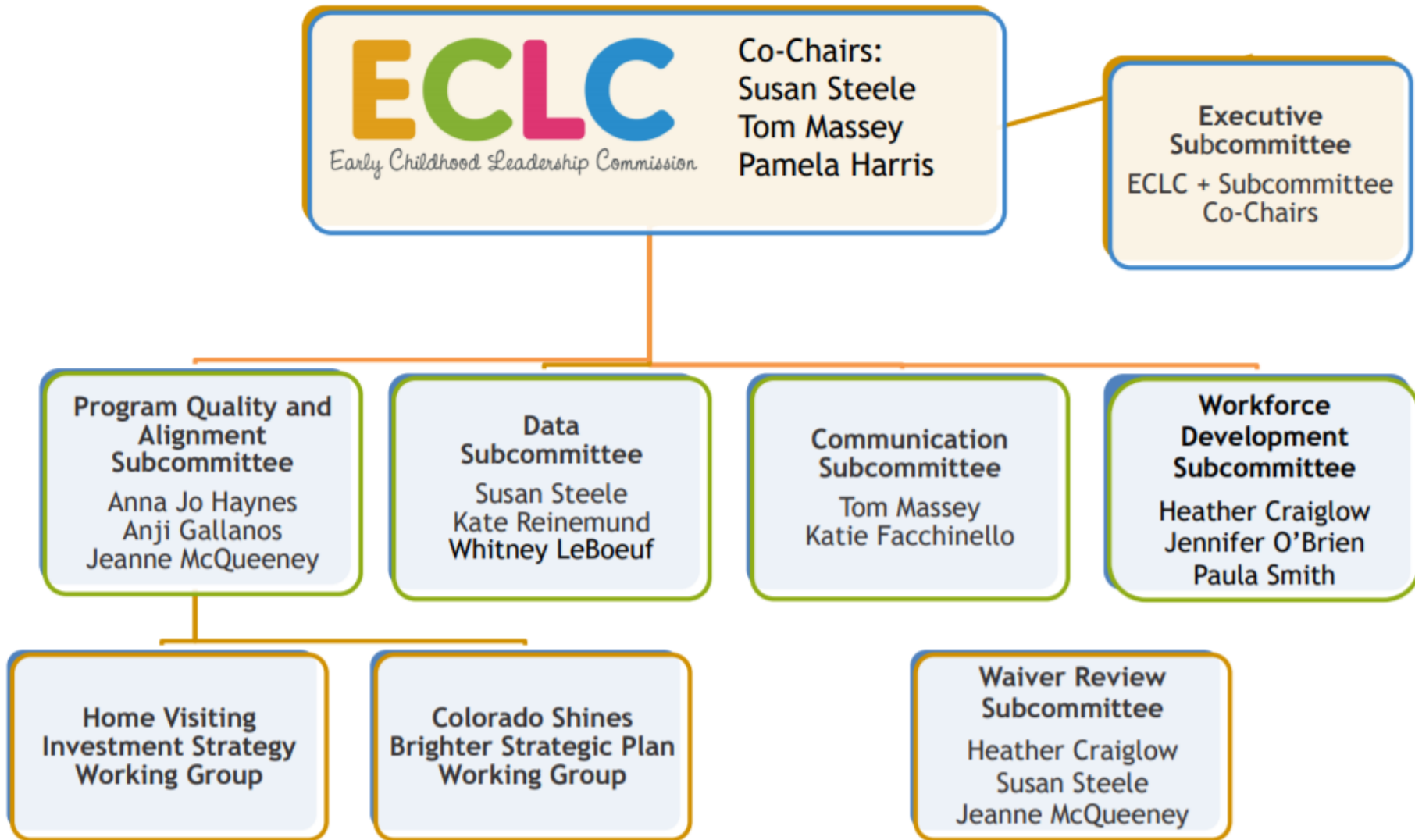
WHO WE ARE

20 Members
including
**5 STATE
AGENCIES**

WHO WE ARE

- Statutory Duties Include:
 - Advise and make **RECOMMENDATIONS**
 - Assist public and private entities with **ALIGNMENT**
 - Monitor strategies to increase **ACCESS, QUALITY** and **EQUITY** of early childhood services and supports

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Accomplishments & Priorities

Early Childhood Colorado 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
- Informing 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

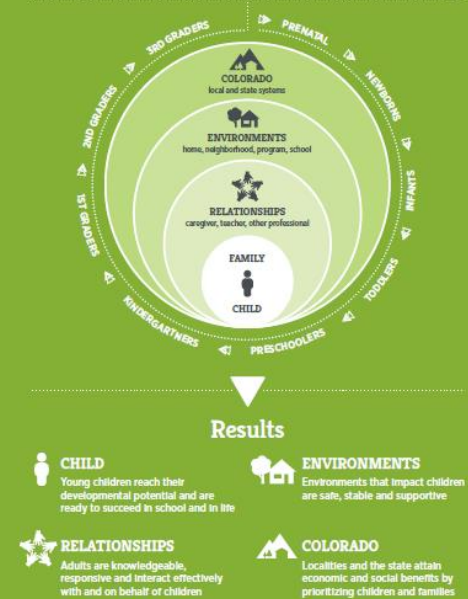
QUALITY

- 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


www.EarlyChildhoodFramework.org

Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Statement



“For many children in our state, their experience is inequitable from birth. This is evidenced by numerous indicators that show that children of color consistently face barriers that lead to lower educational attainment, poorer health outcomes, and other lifelong challenges. The importance of early care and education in challenging and breaking through these systemic inequities cannot be overstated.”

Universal Preschool Policy Discussion Guide



Universal Preschool Policy Discussion Guide

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Critical "Must Haves" in Colorado's Universal Preschool Policy

The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) embraces the following as essential components when reviewing, considering, and recommending policies related to universal preschool."

- Equity drives decisions and priorities: CO recognizes that equity does not mean equality (the same answer, size, approach in every instance), rather it allows flexibility based on the context to best meet needs.
- Universal and targeted: CO designs universal preschool to serve ALL children while providing for additional resources and supports for those furthest from opportunity.
- High quality standards: CO sets culturally responsive, comprehensive, high quality standards across all aspects of a program AND provides pathways and supports to achieve them.
- Child and family centric services: CO designs programs and systems based on family voice and needs, while continuously engaging families to improve child and family experience, health, and wellbeing.
- Child and program outcomes: CO demonstrates outcomes and impact with the necessary tracking and reporting systems to ensure accountability.
- Access: CO expands and increases options for family choice, including settings in licensed community-based centers, family child care homes, and school settings.
- Diverse workforce: CO supports and champions a diverse workforce by prioritizing standards that promote equitable opportunities for preparation and compensation, professional development, and educational and training pathways for early childhood professionals in all settings.
- Mixed delivery system: CO invests in building capacity of communities, programs, and workforce to ensure licensed community-based centers, family child care homes, and school settings provide quality programming.
- Streamlined administrative burden: CO creates efficiencies in administrative and eligibility functions at family, program, and community levels to reinvest in services and workforce.
- Strengthened and expanded resources: CO creates policies and allocates funding in a way that strengthens the broader early childhood system, including birth to 3 services.

Colorado's Early Childhood Leadership Commission - Stewards of Equity

The Early Childhood Colorado Framework is founded upon the pillars of access, quality, and equity in serving all children and families in our state. These guiding principles speak to the commitment of the early childhood community to declare unequivocally that racism has no place in our communities.

The ECLC is charged with playing a key role in identifying, evaluating, and recommending policy alternatives aligned with key preschool design and implementation questions arising from the Future of Preschool Policy Development process. The ECLC believes that Colorado's universal preschool program will be successful when, and only when, policies and practices are in the pursuit of equity:

▲ Equity from a child and family perspective

▲ Equity from a workforce perspective

▲ Equity from a community perspective

What is Equity-mindedness in Policy?

For many children in our state, their experience is inequitable from birth. This is evidenced by numerous indicators that show that children of color consistently face barriers that lead to lower educational attainment, poorer health outcomes, and other lifelong challenges. The importance of early care and education in challenging and breaking through these systemic inequities cannot be overstated. Three-month-old babies can visually categorize faces by race. Toddlers begin to connect racial features to a person's behavior. Preschoolers can identify and act out against racial injustice on their own. Children's experiences in their formative years have the power to change our world.

We express our sincere gratitude to all who have dedicated their work and lives to fighting for access, quality, and equity within communities. We stand with you and know that we have much more work to do together.

ECLC Statement on Equity, August 2020

"Equity is not 'nice to have.' It's a 'got to have.' Unless we focus on African American and Latino students, our country will not get to where it needs to be." -James R. Merriam, President and CEO, Lumina Foundation

An equity focus in policy recognizes the need to eliminate disparities in outcomes of children and families from underserved and underrepresented populations.

It is deliberately color-conscious and seeks to prevent or eliminate gaps for Native Americans, African American, Latino, refugee, and other marginalized children and families.

It prioritizes institutional or program accountability rather than child or family challenges/gaps/deficits and monitors the impacts of specific groups to see when policies and practices are creating or worsening inequality.

Applying an equity-minded focus requires policymakers to consider who benefits, who loses, and how children and families in greatest need fare as a result of the policy.

An equity-minded lens can also help identify equity "assets," or policies that may already be in place that advance equity.

Protocol for Assessing Equity-Mindedness in State Policy, Center for Urban Education, Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California, January 2017

Early Childhood Leadership Commission, Universal Preschool Policy Discussion Guide | 2 | Fall 2020

- Critical “must-have” components in a universal preschool program
- Equity-mindedness in policy making
- Key Questions for consideration

HB21-1304: Department of Early Childhood

TIMELINE

- **Transition Plan for Department for Early Childhood (effective July 1, 2022)**
→ November 1, 2021
- **Recommendations for Universal Preschool Program Implementation (effective July 2023)**
→ January 1, 2022

TIMELINE

June 2021
HB21 -
1304
passed

July-Dec. 2021
TAG: Multiple meetings,
with more frequent
subgroup meetings
TWG: Weekly meetings
ECLC: Multiple meetings

Nov. 1-Nov. 15, 2021
By Nov. 15, **TWG** submits
the approved plan to
other legislative
committees.

Jan. 1-Jan. 15, 2022
By Jan. 1, **TWG** submits
new preschool program
recommendations to
ECLC for approval by
Jan. 15, then to the
legislature. **Jan 2: Gov's**
office submits any
budget amendments.

July 1, 2022
New
Department of
Early
Childhood is
launched

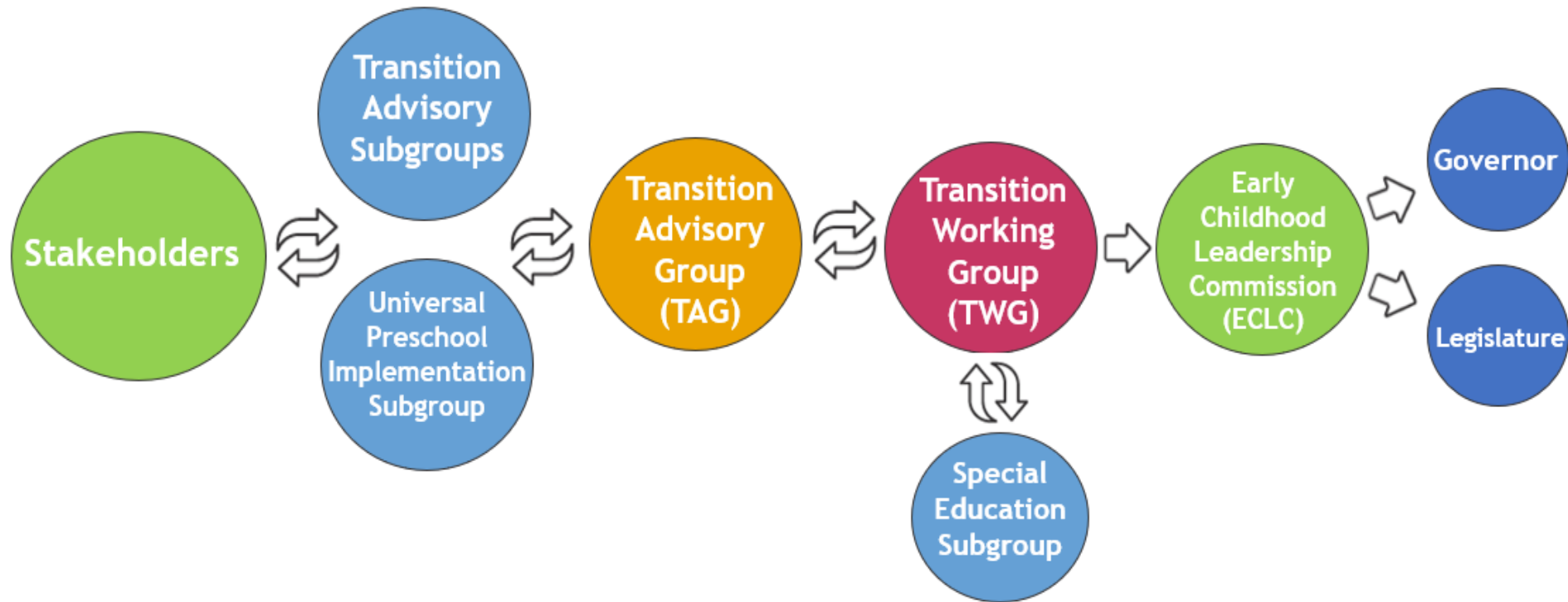
By Nov. 1, 2021
Gov's office submits the
transition plan, developed by
TWG with the advice of **TAG**, as
part of its 2023 budget request to
the legislature.
Gov's office also submits the plan
to **ECLC** for approval.

By Dec. 1, 2021
TWG presents approved
transition plan to the
Early Childhood and
School Readiness
Legislative Commission.

2022 & 2023 Leg.
Sessions
Legislature
considers laws
necessary based on
submitted plans.

By July 2023
Launch new
universal
voluntary
preschool
program.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- **Interactive User-Focused Listening Sessions**
 - Program Providers, Parents/Families, and Members of the Early Childhood Workforce
- **Monthly Town Halls**
 - [Tuesday, August 10 at 5:30pm](#)
- **Monthly Newsletter**
 - [Sign up to receive these regular updates!](#)
- **Stakeholder Feedback Form**
 - Share your recommendations, input, questions or suggestions through this [Feedback Form](#)
- **Statewide Listening Tour**
 - Details coming soon!

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



MISSION, VISION 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.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

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 that 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 that 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.

THANK YOU!



For more information on the Transition Planning Process:
www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org/transition

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