



EARLY **MILESTONES**  
COLORADO

IDEAL LEARNING IN COLORADO

LEGISLATIVE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL FINANCE

OCTOBER 19, 2021

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GET TO KNOW YOUR PRESENTER

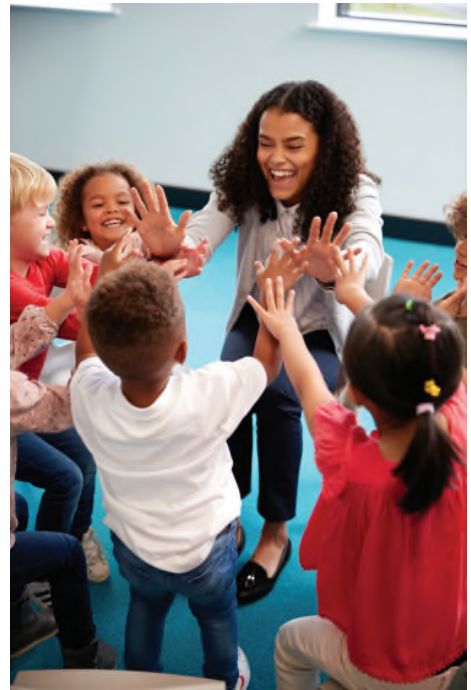
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THE SCIENCE OF EARLY LEARNING IS CLEAR AND COMPELLING

- Children learn and grow naturally from birth - they can't help it!
- Strong, stable relationships with families and caregivers are the foundation of brain development
- Racism, poverty and trauma are harmful to children
- Nurturing environments are protective
- Play leads learning



EARLY MILESTONES



EDUCATORS AGREE EARLY CHILDHOOD IS A UNIQUE  
DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD THAT REQUIRES EXPERT,  
SENSITIVE TEACHING

- Children learn best through exploration and interaction
  - Play is how children learn, not an add-on
- Children's identities develop early - and we can support every child

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## WHAT IS IDEAL LEARNING?

- A term developed by ECE researchers and experts across different learning approaches to create a common language to describe equity-centered learning that focuses on all aspects of a young child's development
- Also referred to as *whole child* or *student-centered learning*



Decision-making reflects a commitment to **equity**

Instruction is **personalized** to acknowledge each child's unique development

**Play** is an essential element of young children's learning

The **teacher is a guide**, nurturing presence, and co-constructor of knowledge

**Children construct knowledge** from diverse experiences to make meaning of the world.



Young children and adults learn through **relationships**

The **environment** is intentionally designed to facilitate children's independence, exploration, and interaction

Continuous learning environments support **adult development**

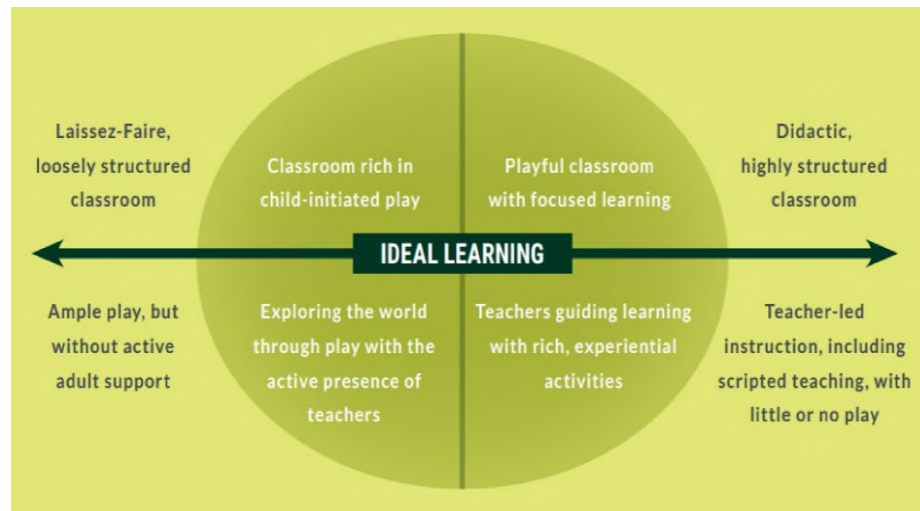
The time of **childhood is valued**

EARLY MILESTONES

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MAKING THE CASE FOR IDEAL LEARNING IN COLORADO

- Pressure to increase test scores has led to more teacher-directed, rote instruction with children as young as four years old
- Opportunity to increase impact of universal preschool if more children are enrolled in high-quality programs



ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS



EARLY MILESTONES



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IDEAL LEARNING MODELS IN COLORADO

- EL Education (formerly Expeditionary Learning)
- HighScope
- Montessori
- Reggio Emilia-inspired
- Tools of the Mind



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WE KNOW THAT FAMILIES OF ALL BACKGROUNDS WANT EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THAT SUPPORT WHOLE-CHILD DEVELOPMENT



YES, PARENTS CARE ABOUT READING AND MATH, BUT THEY ALSO WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO BE **WELL-ROUNDED, JOYFUL, AND CAPABLE**

EARLY MILESTONES

# THANK YOU



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