



## 2011-2012 ANNUAL REPORT

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Dear Friends of the Early Childhood Council,

The Early Childhood Council of Larimer County had another outstanding year of successful collaborations to meet the needs of young children and the community in which they live. Our Council's Executive Director, Bev Thurber, was invited to participate in the Clinton Global Initiative, again receiving national recognition for the truly excellent leadership and services she and the Council provide.

Some of the important highlights of this year included the successful completion of a community-wide three-year strategic planning effort and application for state funding for the next three years; a strong business outreach program, with three employer roundtables; continued coaching and programming to prevent and address health and mental health care issues in child care; work to increase access to quality childcare and enrollment in Medicaid/CHP+ by economically challenged families; and impactful parent education through Best Start for Babies. We are very proud of the important difference the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County makes in the lives of the children and families in Larimer County and beyond.

Our thanks go to all of our 2011-2012 funders and partners for working collaboratively with the Council to better serve children in Larimer County.

Karen Caplovitz Barrett, Ph.D.  
President, ECCLC Board of Directors

Approximately 1200  
volunteer hours  
supported Council work.

### A NEW & IMPROVED WEBSITE

In 2012, we launched our new, redesigned website! ECCLC hired A-Train Marketing and Rocket Jones web developers to create a visually appealing site inspired by the ECCLC brand.

After many hours of hard work by the web developers and ECCLC Staff, a new website structure was chosen that brought energy to our image while providing more user friendly features, including a Google search tool and online registration for ECCLC trainings and workshops. Other features include rotating pictures and quotes to spark inspiration and thought, a regularly updated "What's New" Feature, and links to our Facebook and Pinterest pages.

Our new and improved ECCLC website now offers parents, providers, business and community members easily accessible information about child development, local trainings & workshops, community resources, and much more .



## ECCLC UNVEILS 2012-2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Once every three years, ECCLC creates a new plan to guide our Council's work. The development of our 2012-15 strategic plan involved over 20 community partners who came together to look at community data, analyze needs and develop strategies to address those needs. But we didn't just look on the surface. For each identified issue, we spent time digging down to understand the root causes that our Council could impact, using the "[Five Whys Process](#)".

Our community's engagement in the strategic planning process resulted in increased joint commitment to and ownership of our early childhood systems work. Our partners and ECCLC staff spent over 537 man hours of documented time in crafting the strategic plan. We were committed to making the process as open and inclusive as possible and providing multiple opportunities for community stakeholders to give input. We strived to draft goals broad enough to remain meaningful over three years, yet well enough defined that actual progress can be achieved. These goals are :

1. Early Care and Education (ECE) Providers consistently implement high quality practices for children birth through eight years of age.
2. Families access high quality early care and education options.
3. Young children, birth through 8 years of age, have access to health care, physical activity, and good nutrition.
4. A culture of supportive, responsive relationships and environments nurtures the social and emotional development of children birth through 8 years of age.

(Full plan at [www.ecclc.org](http://www.ecclc.org))

Throughout our strategic planning process, it was clear that transforming the system of early childhood services in Larimer County requires a multi-faceted approach that:

- maintains and strengthens existing partnerships and establishes new partnerships with others in the early childhood field
- increases engagement of parents
- reaches out to and establishes connections with entities outside early childhood.

We believe this three prong approach comprises a strong foundation for transforming the early childhood system.



## 9TH ANNUAL AFTER SCHOOL ZONE CONFERENCE



*Above Left* : The "Science Wizard" cooks up something in his session as he teaches school age care providers fun tips for incorporating science into every day lessons.

*Above Right*: Participants learn some new moves in a music workshop.



123 people attended our After School Zone Conference (ASZ), which provides training and resources for school age care providers.

## ECCLC PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL WORK

In recognition of its work, ECCLC staff members continue to be invited to participate in national forums. A highlight this year was when our director, Bev Thurber, was invited to participate in the Early Childhood Working Group of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) America. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual event of CGI America, which brings together leaders from the business, foundation, NGO, and government sectors to develop



**CGI AMERICA**  
CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE

solutions that promote economic recovery and growth. The Early Childhood Working Group was added in 2012. It was an honor to be asked to participate to provide the local community perspective on issues. Each participant is asked to make a commitment to continue this focus during the year. ECCLC is excited to be partnering with the City of Fort Collins Department of Social Sustainability and Climate Wise Program to *Promote Business Engagement in Early Childhood*. Read more about our initiative at the [CGI America](#) website.

In addition to the CGI America, our Quality Support Team Coordinator, Lisa Sadar, was funded by CSEFEL\*/Vanderbilt University to attend the National Training Institute: Addressing Challenging Behavior Conference. While there, Lisa served as a panel member to share ECCLC experiences in developing a broad based community-wide team to change the way our community responds to children with challenging behavior. Being at the event afforded ECCLC an opportunity to learn from other communities and get up-to-date information on training efforts related to this model across the United States.

## SUPPORTING CHILDREN SOCIALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND ACADEMICALLY

The impact of work being done to support young children's social and emotional well-being continued and deepened in 2012. Eleven early childhood programs were supported in implementing best practices as identified by the CSEFEL\* Pyramid Model. This Model focuses on strengthening relationships between teachers and each child, between children, and between adults, including the intentional teaching of critical social skills that children may not otherwise pick up.

ECCLC coaching staff used tools to measure the implementation of these practices and provided follow-up support to staff to maintain and enhance the use of these practices.

The results were impressive. Based on pre and post assessment of children (using the Social Competency Scale), independent CSU researchers found significant increases in the children's social/emotional and academic skills. The results of data reported for 211 preschool age children indicated that these children had improved emotional regulation and academic scores. Most compelling was that children identified as 'at risk' showed even greater growth. In addition the analysis indicated that these changes were not due to chance, but were due to the efforts of the programs in which these children were enrolled.

We offered 127 hours of training and awarded over \$43,700 in college scholarships to Early Care & Education professionals.

For the 2011-2012 year, coaching support included 1671 hours of face to face coaching contact, 256 hours of travel, 605 hours of preparation and follow up, using 730 face to face visits, 320 phone calls and 2179 e-mails.

\*[Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning](#)

## FAMILIES HELPING THEIR BABIES & TODDLERS GET A “BEST START”!

Best Start for Babies (BSB) completed 2 class sessions in the 2011-2012 year and launched the Best Start for Toddlers (BST) portion of the program. Two BST classes were also completed during the 2011-12 year. The Best Start for Babies classes are for families who are either pregnant or have a baby under one year old and are in need of extra education and support. The Best Start for Toddlers classes are for the families who've completed the Babies' session and now have a child aged 1-3 years old.

BSB and BST classes are based on the *Partners for a Healthy Baby* curriculum and customized to meet the needs and interests of the families. For example, because many parents in the BST class were concerned about temper tantrums, emphasis was placed on this topic.

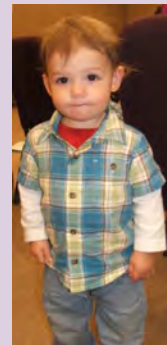
In this second year of the program, among the 4 sessions held, the drop-out rate was less than 25%. BSB and BST classes are run in collaboration with Weld County's Early Childhood Council. We had 104 parents graduate from the Babies and Toddlers classes in both Larimer and Weld Counties this year.

59 parents attended Best Start for Babies and Best Start for Toddlers classes in Larimer County.



### **Best Start for Babies**

*Above:* 6 month old Mason attends the BSB classes with his mom.



### **Best Start for Toddlers**

*Left:* Mason is now thriving at 18 months old.

## EXPANDING QUALITY FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS (EQIT) PARTICIPATES IN DU STUDY

ECCLC's Expanding Quality for Infants and Toddlers program (EQIT) was one of three EQIT programs in Colorado selected to participate in a research study from May 2011 to May 2013. This study, which is funded by the Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation and conducted by the Marsico Institute of the University of Denver's Morgridge College of Education, is focusing on assessing the impact of the EQIT professional development training and coaching for caregivers who work with infants and toddlers.

Participating in the study created opportunities for caregivers who work with infants and toddlers to contribute to the study of child development, specifically related to training and coaching experiences. As an added benefit for some of the participants, additional hours of on site coaching were provided.

Participants are asked to fill out surveys regarding their ideas about children and caring for or teaching children. They are also observed three times in their place of work: at the beginning and end of the EQIT class, and four months after all coursework and coaching ends. A total of 15 centers and family child care programs participated in 2011-2012 and participation will continue through the spring of 2013. The EQIT team looks forward to learning the results of the research and the guidance for best practices for those working with infants and toddlers.



In July 2011, the ECCLC became a Certified Application Assistance Site (CAAS) for Medicaid and Colorado Health Plan Plus (CHP+). We also helped 5 other local agencies become CAAS's last year.

## REACHING THE BROADER COMMUNITY

One of the challenges in the early childhood field has been reaching audiences beyond those who are already involved in the field. Although research clearly demonstrates that early childhood has an impact on the workforce (both current and future), early childhood issues have usually been dismissed as “just” a family issue. In 2011-12, the Women’s Foundation of Colorado funded some outreach to engage employers because of the potential impact of family friendly policies in supporting families moving out of poverty.

Using this funding, Employer Roundtables were held in Estes Park, Loveland and Fort Collins as a collaborative effort of ECCLC, United Way of Larimer County, Colorado State University, EVICS (Estes Valley Investment in Childhood Success) and EPIC (Executives Partnering to Invest in Children). The goal of the Roundtables was to get feedback from business and government employers, and to start to engage them in understanding the impact of child care on the workforce. Some key messages that resonated included:

- The disconnection between employers and employees around absenteeism. According to the 2010 *Study of Demand and Impact of Early Care and Education Services in Larimer County*, only 7% of employers thought their employees missed work due to child care issues, while 69% of employees with children reported one or more days of absence (not including missing work due to a child being sick).
- The Return on Investment (ROI) for investing in early childhood.
- The availability of the EPIC Employer toolkit, which is an online resource for employers on implementing family friendly policies: [www.EPICEmployerToolkit.org](http://www.EPICEmployerToolkit.org).

Using feedback from these Roundtable Discussions, ECCLC took several steps to continue its outreach efforts, and plans to expand these efforts in the coming year:

- Created a [For Employers and Community](#) section of its website, with resources and information about early childhood.
- Developed a standard presentation for employers and community members about early childhood and the workforce, and began giving presentations to community groups.
- Assisted local employers, including the City of Fort Collins, by providing resources and information about child care and assisting with the development of employee surveys.



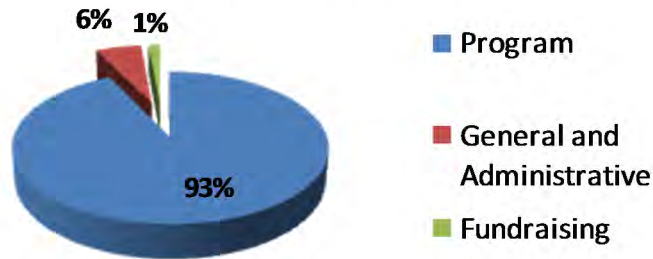
Fifty five business and community leaders in Larimer County attended our Employer Roundtable events.

For the 2011-2012 year, our Child Care Referral Program provided 630 families FREE child care referrals over the telephone or in person, with an additional 599 families doing internet searches of the child care database.

**BUDGET AND FINANCIALS**

**2011-12 Expenses**

Total expenses = \$654,962

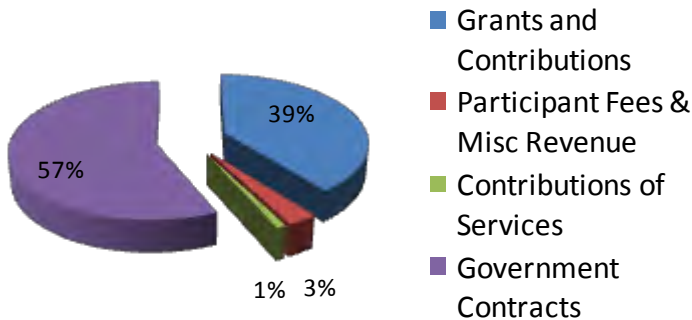


We deeply appreciate the support provided by the following major funders during our 2011-12 fiscal year.

- Bohemian Foundation**
- Colorado Department of Education**
- Colorado Department of Human Services**
- Colorado Trust**
- The Women’s Foundation of Colorado**
- El Pomar Foundation’s North Regional Council**
- Qualistar Colorado**
- Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation**
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (TGYS)**

**2011-12 Revenue**

Total revenue = \$675,213



Our thanks also go to the many individuals and businesses who supported us with their generous contributions.

*Note: Some revenue received in FY 2011-2012 was carried over to FY 2012-2013.*

**OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Our continued thanks and appreciation for our governing Board of Directors. They dedicate their time to attend monthly Board meetings and serve on various committees for our work.

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