



EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL OF LARIMER COUNTY

2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Dear Friends of the Early Childhood Council,

This past year will go down as a year of big changes in the early childhood climate in our state and also within the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County. We have witnessed the creation of a new Colorado Office of Early Childhood, which engages partners statewide in implementing a comprehensive plan to improve outcomes for young children and their families.

New CCAP legislation, which was passed last spring, will, among other things, streamline and simplify administrative processes, enable student parents to apply for CCAP funding, and reimburse childcare providers for at least 15 days a year of absences and/or holidays.

The new Colorado Shines Quality Rating Improvement System focuses on elevating the quality of early education programs for all children, with special emphasis on ensuring high quality programs for more children with high needs.

The Early Childhood Council has contributed to these and many more efforts aimed at strengthening families and children. At the same time, the Council has gone through its own changes including staff departing and new staff joining, office expansion, a new organizational structure, and an updated vision and mission.

We are pleased to see greater and greater participation at our monthly community meetings and we welcome everyone who works with or has an interest in young children to attend and be a part of the Council's – and our community's – efforts to increase support to children and families in our community. Finally, we'd like to thank all of our 2013-14 funders and partners for working collaboratively with the Council to better serve children in Larimer County.

Anne Lance, 2013-14 President
ECCLC Board of Directors



Council meeting attendees wear blue to April's meeting to promote Child Abuse Prevention.

NEW VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

During our February and March Council meetings, Suzanne Jarboe-Simpson facilitated our discussions to review and refine ECCLC's vision and mission. Council members discussed who we are, what we do, for whom we do it, and why we do it. Through a collaborative effort of our Council members, new vision and mission statements were created.

NEW VISION: *All children in Larimer County are valued, healthy and thriving.*

NEW MISSION: *We bring the community together to share knowledge and resources, build expertise and work collaboratively to ensure that all young children in Larimer County have the care, support, and opportunities necessary to grow, learn and succeed.*

Thank you to all who contributed to these discussions. We continue to strive to fulfill this vision and mission in our work everyday.

WORKING TOGETHER SO CHILDREN THRIVE

BE READY SPREADS ITS SCHOOL READINESS CAMPAIGN

In the fall of 2013, ECCLC was a key partner in Larimer's countywide launch of the Be Ready public education campaign. In August, the Be Ready website was released. The website contains fun and easy activities to do at home with children birth through preschool age to foster school readiness. Printed information was also distributed by over 40 partner agencies to parents and caregivers. The Be Ready Parent Fair, attended by 100 families, shared helpful community resources and even more activities to do at home to prepare children for school. Be Ready continues to expand its partnerships with community agencies and reach increasing numbers of parents and caregivers. Check it out at www.BeReadyLarimerCounty.org

AFTER SCHOOL ZONE CONFERENCE

ECCLC's 10th Annual School Age Conference was attended by 217 early childhood professionals and community members, which was a 60% increase over the previous year. A highlight of the conference was a keynote address by Dr. Temple Grandin. Dr. Grandin presented *The Way I See It*. Her description of the challenges she faces dealing with autism was enlightening for audience members.

Over lunch Ernie Batson presented *Let's Talk About Children*, sharing his energy and enthusiasm to inspire children and adults to be their very best. There were also 15 hands-on and interactive breakout workshops that offered creative and useful suggestions for day to day programming with school-aged children. Group Publishing graciously hosted the conference honoring school-aged child care providers with a professional, yet cozy and warm atmosphere.



Lauren and our Health Intern, Lisa, greet parents at the Be Ready Parent Fair. Lauren and Lisa informed parents of what we offer to the community and had children feel and guess what was in each box!

BE READY MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION

During spring 2014, the ECCLC distributed Be Ready materials to child care centers and family child care homes in Larimer County. In total, we distributed 2,596 Be Ready materials, including English and Spanish Be Ready Brochures for families and Be Ready stickers for children. As we continue to work with child care centers and family child care homes in Larimer County, we will continue to share Be Ready information.



REFERRAL PROGRAM

During July and August 2013, ECCLC's Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) program provided referrals for parents in Weld County while its CCR&R searched for a new referral specialist. During that time period, 27 referrals were supplied to clients looking for care in Weld County. Our referral team worked hard to learn about Weld County and its community resources so they could provide the same high quality services to Weld County families as they provide to Larimer's families.

We are proud that our Referral Specialists continue to provide top notch services, once again receiving almost perfect scores on the "secret shopper" calls conducted by Qualistar Colorado, who contracts with us to provide this vital community service.

For the 2013-14 year, our Child Care Referral Program provided 505 families FREE child care referrals over the telephone or in person, with an additional 2,460 internet searches of the child care database.

CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE CONFERENCE



Our Director, Bev Thurber, with Secretary Hillary Clinton.

This picture was taken in recognition of the commitment the ECCLC made two years ago to support businesses interested in early childhood issues through a partnership with the City of Fort Collins' ClimateWise program.

This commitment was an outgrowth of Bev's involvement with Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) America, an initiative which brings together leaders in business, government, and civil society to generate and implement commitments to create jobs, stimulate economic growth, foster innovation, and support workforce development in the United States. In June, Bev again had the privilege of participating in the Early Childhood Working Group of the 2014 Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) America conference, providing a local perspective to conversations about early childhood issues across the country.

LEGISLATION IMPACTS QUALITY OF INFANT/TODDLER CARE

In 2013, the Colorado Legislature passed HB 13-1291, which allocated three million dollars to increase the quality of care and access to care for some of the most vulnerable of children: those under the age of three who qualify for the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) for low income families.

Larimer County received funding from this bill through a collaborative grant submitted by ECCLC and the Larimer County CCAP office. As a result, 22 child care centers and family child care homes serving over 300 infants and toddlers received higher reimbursement rates for CCAP children under age three if they worked towards or achieved a national accreditation (NAEYC or NAFCC) or a state Qualistar rating of 3 or 4 stars. Total increased reimbursements equaled \$247,000. Individual programs received up to \$46,000 in increased subsidies. An additional \$114,000 was invested in these programs through fees to become rated/accredited, coaching supports, resource funds to support quality improvement, and scholarships and training from ECCLC.

Two programs reported that without these funds they would have closed their doors. Two other programs, which were considering no longer accepting CCAP due to the low reimbursement rate, decided to continue to accept children on CCAP subsidies. Several programs began accepting children on subsidies, increasing the choices available to families on the CCAP program.

ECCLC offered 180 hours of training and awarded \$49,485 in scholarships for college classes.

Quality Support Services were provided to 48 programs, totaling 104 classrooms. Over 1,390 children were impacted by these services and \$80,000 was awarded in resource grants.

REFERRAL ROAD MAPPING TASK FORCE

As ECCLC has worked with child care programs that strive to support children's overall health and development, it has become apparent that helping children access social, emotional, and developmental services can be confusing and frustrating for the parents, children, and caregivers. In Larimer County, significant numbers of children who have been identified as potentially having developmental delays or in need of mental health support are not actually obtaining services. We know that the earlier children needing support are provided services, the greater chance of positive outcomes. In order to better understand the barriers that prevent children from obtaining the services they need, ECCLC convened a broad based group of stakeholders, including representatives from the medical community, school districts, mental health and other therapists, Early Intervention and the Larimer County Departments of Human Services and Health & Environment. The goal set by the group is that:

All children's healthy development (including social emotional) is optimized by a coordinated system that supports:

- **Informed parents/caregivers**
- **Universal standardized developmental screening**
- **Effective referrals**

With facilitation and technical assistance from Assuring Better Child Development (ABCD), the task force has:

- Identified the role that different community agencies play in the process
- Developed community quality standards for each step of the process

Going forward, members of this task force will begin contacting key players, especially health care practices, to share the work that has been done and provide support to organizations and practices willing to implement the standards that have been developed.

CCAP TASK FORCE: HOW LARIMER COUNTY'S EFFORTS INFLUENCED LEGISLATION

This year, with funding from Colorado Trust, ECCLC helped 12 families enroll in health insurance by covering the cost of birth certificates and/or the Child Health Plan Plus enrollment fee.

44 child care providers completed the Expanding Quality for Infants and Toddlers (EQIT) class. They received 140 hours of coaching in addition to the 48 hours of classroom instruction.

When Larimer County's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) did a presentation for our Council meeting outlining challenges, the response from our Council members was "what can we do?". Those words took shape in the establishment of the Larimer County CCAP Task Force, a group facilitated by ECCLC and a community volunteer, and made up of Larimer County CCAP staff, Child Care Centers (non-profit, locally owned, and corporate), and School Age Programs.

From May through October 2013, this task force met to analyze challenges and explore potential changes to the CCAP program in Larimer County. Recognizing that CCAP is a program with federal, state and local components, our focus was on processes that could potentially be changed at the county level, either through administrative changes or through the Council's waiver authority. Although our goal was not to request additional financial resources, throughout the discussions it was clear that rates and financial constraints impact the availability and quality of care for children. The end result was a series of recommendations for policy and regulatory change, both at the state and local level. Our local CCAP program also identified and eliminated five county forms from the application process, saving significant time for both families and eligibility technicians.

Shortly after our Task Force was convened, a similar effort was started at the state level called the Colorado CCAP Collaborative. In the fall 2013, we were asked to present our findings to this state level task force. The detailed recommendations were received enthusiastically and many of them ended up in House Bill 14-1317, legislation which was passed in the Spring 2014 to advance the "two generation" goal of ensuring families can stay in the workforce knowing their children are being cared for in high quality settings that promote their school readiness.

BEST START FOR BABIES COMPLETES FOURTH YEAR OF SERVICES FOR FAMILIES



The Best Start for Babies and Toddlers (BSB/T) program served 81 parents in 2013-2014 and 413 parents total in the last 4 years. In partnership with the teen parent programs in Larimer County, 9 teen parents received the BSB/T curriculum.

BSB/T measures parental self-efficacy and increases in knowledge of child development using two validated tools. According to Dr. David MacPhee from Colorado State University, who has con-

ducted an independent evaluation of BSB/T, there is a statistically significant increase in both knowledge and self-efficacy in more than 3/4 of the participants between pre and post assessments.

This year BSB/T was able to use two Master's level CSU interns, as well as an undergraduate intern, which resulted in a savings of approximately \$5,450 in trainer and administrative costs. ECCLC's Board of Directors raised more than \$5,000 through a Community Funded online donation program.

Participants are strongly benefiting from the program. One mother even said, "I love that I can ask questions and not be judged! This class is extremely useful! LOVE it and all the people in it!" Another mother indicated, "Before these classes, I felt confused and overwhelmed, but now I feel more at ease and happy".



55 (14%) of all licensed child care providers reported being involved in formal quality improvement efforts.

Volunteers contributed 2,409 hours in support of Council work.

EVICS ANNUAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE

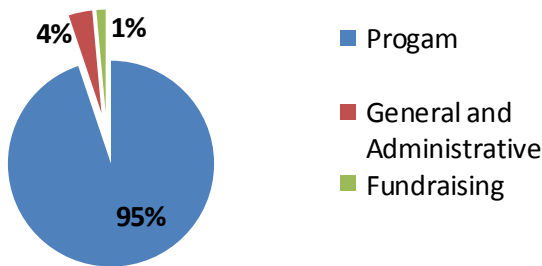


Estes Valley Investment in Childhood Success (EVICS) held its 5th annual Early Childhood Education conference on April 18th, 2014, at the YMCA Of the Rockies. The 55 early childhood professionals attending heard from 10 speakers on various topics related to early childhood. Included were presentations on the importance of physical activity in children, how to incorporate fun activities into everyday life and how to help children who have experienced trauma. Thanks to all who attended and contributed to the success of this conference!

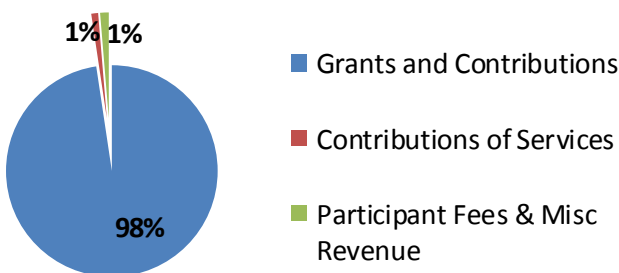
BUDGET AND FINANCIALS

2013-14 Expense

Total Expenses * = 843,299

**2013-14 Revenue**

Total Revenue * = 762,194



We deeply appreciate the support provided by the following major funders during our 2013-14 fiscal year:

Bohemian Foundation
Colorado Department of Education
Office of Early Childhood (Colorado Department of Human Services)
Colorado Trust
Qualistar Colorado
Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation
Tony Gramscas Youth Services Program (Colorado Department of Human Services)

Thanks also to the following major funders of the Best Start for Babies Program, a collaborative program with United Way of Weld County:

Colorado Children's Trust Fund
El Pomar Foundation's North Regional Council
Ida J Murphy and Russel O. Allen Fund (Community Foundation of Northern Colorado)
Kaufman Family Foundation
Motherlove Herbal Company
Nordson Foundation

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

***FISCAL NOTE:** \$81,105 of income was recognized in the 2012-13 Fiscal Year, but spent in the 2013-14 Fiscal Year, because it was part of a two year grant received in FY13.

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.

Anne Lance, **President**
Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center

Heather Griffith, **Vice President & Council Liaison**
Young People's Learning Center

Linda Geis, **Treasurer**
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BASE Camp

Jane Everett
Thompson School District

Mims Harris
Community Member/Consultant

Jane Stuart
Estes Valley Investment in Childhood Success (EVICS)

Corinne Van Dyke
Poudre School District

Belinda Voit
Retired Pediatrician

Executive Director: Beverly Wood Thurber
 All Board and Staff may be contacted through www.ecclc.org