



# EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL OF LARIMER COUNTY

## 2014-2015 Annual Report

### Letter From the President of the Board



Across the state of Colorado, early child care providers, education specialists, and parents are experiencing a massive shift in how we create quality experiences for young children. This past year alone, we have seen the rollout for the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for licensed early care and education programs, the Professional Development Information System (PDIS) supporting professional development for Colorado's early childhood workforce, the updated Early Childhood Credential for professionals working in the field, and the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) Pilot program to expand quality care options for families in need of child care services.

The Early Childhood Council of Larimer County is at the forefront of these efforts and continues to be a leader in the movement. Our work is guided by our mission to bring the community together to share knowledge and resources, and to 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.

I am proud to be the President of the Board of such a truly amazing organization. Together, we are working to ensure that all children in Larimer County, now and in the future, are valued, healthy, and thriving.

- Heather Griffith, 2014-15 President, ECCLC Board of Directors

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### Raising of America

In November, Rocky Mountain PBS and Be Ready co-hosted a special screening of the PBS Documentary *"The Raising of America: Are We Crazy About Our Kids?"* which highlights the critical impact of early childhood experiences on our society. Despite extensive research demonstrating the impact of investment in the early years, the documentary tells a powerful story of how our society is still failing to support quality early learning experiences. Over 50 community leaders from Larimer County attended this screening and participated in conversations about our investment in early childhood care and education. Additional screenings were held in March in Estes Park, Loveland, and Fort Collins, attended by 100 business leaders, education professionals, and parent groups. The [series](#) can be viewed on the PBS website.



Harris Ravine, President of Rocky Mountain PBS and Bev Thurber answer questions from the audience.

WORKING TOGETHER SO CHILDREN THRIVE

## Scholarship Program Milestone!

Since its inception in 2002, the Professional Development Program at ECCLC has awarded over 1100 scholarships to early care and education professionals in Larimer County taking college level courses towards their qualifications, credentials, licenses, and degrees.



During the summer 2015 semester, the Professional Development Program surpassed the \$500,000 mark in total scholarship awards. We are so proud of the level of commitment and professionalism that our ECE students have displayed in Larimer County!

*Cassandra, an early childhood teacher from River Song Waldorf School, received a scholarship from ECCLC this summer. Her scholarship marked over \$500,000 in scholarship awards since 2002.*

## After School Zone Conference

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual After School Zone Conference held on Saturday, November 8, 2014 at Group Publishing was another huge success. This conference provides a unique opportunity in Northern Colorado for before and after school providers to gather and learn information relevant to school age children. Both keynote addresses were highly engaging: "The Power of Before and After School Care Programs" by Lamb Caro and "Coloring Inside, Outside, and Without Lines!" by Deidre Houston Magee. In addition to these presentations, the 170 participants had choices among 15 hands-on workshops covering concepts and activities that participants could take back to their programs.



*"Let's Get Movin' - Musically!" workshop presented by Amanda Silvestri, Elementary School Specialist.*

## Bilingual Childcare in Estes Park!

For years, the availability of licensed childcare services, especially for infants and toddlers, has been extremely limited in Estes Park. Thanks to funding provided by ECCLC through Colorado's Infant Toddler Quality and Availability Grant, ECCLC's close partner, Estes Valley Investment in Childhood Success (EVICS), was able to recruit 2 new bilingual family childcare providers. It was an exciting day for parents in the Estes Valley when Veronica Rojas and Maricruz Ortiz received their family child care home licenses in May and opened their homes to families seeking childcare for infants through preschool age children. In order to open their doors, they each completed a 15-hour class focused on child growth and development, as well as certifications in First Aid, CPR, and Medication Administration. These providers can serve up to 6 young children in their care per day, which is a significant addition to the childcare capacity in the Estes Valley. Even more exciting, these new providers accept Spanish and English speaking families, offering bilingual childcare where children and adults can learn from each other.



*Left to right: Nancy Almond (EVICS Director), Maricruz Ortiz, Veronica Ruiz, Natasha Iszler (EVICS staff)*

## Colorado Shines and PDIS

With a year of so many changes in early childhood, ECCLC kept busy as the key conduit for information going out to all community childcare providers. Two new major early childhood systems were implemented:

- The Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): This quality rating system for child care programs in Colorado replaced the previous Qualistar rating. The first ratings under the new system began in February 2015;
- The Professional Development Information System (PDIS): This online data base was created to allow early childhood professionals the ability to take charge of their professional development and have portable, personal records. It also integrated with a new Early Childhood Credentialing system for early childhood professionals. The PDIS system went live in April 2015.

Our staff kept busy learning several new database systems in preparation for the release of these new, integrated platforms. They also shared information broadly with the community, offering two summits, family child care home association presentations, two presentations to the childcare center directors' group, and a computer lab day at Front Range Community College to assist providers with PDIS. Participating providers received support from ECCLC staff to help them get familiar with all the options so they could make informed choices about their careers and programs.

Our Quality Support Team and Professional Development Coordinator were instrumental in helping early adopter programs get up and running in the new system. In addition to the work done under the CCCAP Pilot program, the programs we supported had 126 early childhood professionals register in the PDIS system between April and June. Even more exciting, of those, 77 applied for and received an Early Childhood Credential under the new system.



## CCCAP PILOT INCREASES STAFF

ECCLC was one of nine early childhood councils selected to participate in a pilot program designed to increase the quality of care for children of families receiving Colorado Child Care Assistance Program subsidies (CCCAP). This program came out of the Colorado Department of Human Services' goal that at least 31% of children receiving CCCAP subsidies are in quality child care settings.

We received funding in December 2014, and had only seven months to recruit and support programs in the new Colorado Shines Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). Because of the increased funding and workload, we expanded our Quality Support Coaching Staff by about 50%, hiring an additional coach and increasing all coaches to full time.

Any program with a mean CCCAP enrollment of 13 or higher was eligible to participate. Seven child care centers participated from start to finish, with six completing their Colorado Shines ratings by June 2015. Nine additional programs received funding for quality improvement due to their designation as an Alternative Pathways site. These programs were either nationally accredited or had an active Qualistar rating, so were able to transfer into Colorado Shines without an additional rating.

*Little Bear's East used CCCAP Pilot funding to purchase new dividers so they can better supervise sleeping infants.*

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**





## **ECCLC by the numbers**

### ***Scholarship Program***

- 78 Scholarships awarded totaling \$45,829
- 25.6% completed classes for a licensing requirement for Early Childhood Teacher or Director Qualifications
- 2 students completed Associates Degrees in Early Childhood Education
- 1 student completed a Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education

### ***Quality Support Services***

- \$229,722 in direct funding support
- 835 hours in in-person coaching
- 43 child care program participants
- 109 classrooms reached
- 1,771 children impacted

### ***Training***

- 77 ECE professionals working with ECCLC received Early Childhood Credentials through PDIS
- 235.5 hours of training provided by ECC staff

### ***Child Care Ratings***

- 2 programs achieved a Qualistar rating (before it was phased out)
- 10 programs achieved a Colorado Shines rating of 2 or higher

### ***Best Start for Babies and Toddlers***

- 2 BSB classes with 44 parent participants
- 1 BST class with 21 parent participants

### ***Child Care Referrals***

- 631 FREE child care referrals
- 25% increase over previous year
- 20 families received enhanced referrals (for non-English speaking families and special needs children)

### ***Volunteers***

- 193 volunteers
- Donated 2,409 hours
- Valued at \$61,863

## **Our new strategic Plan**



Once every three years, ECCLC creates a new strategic plan to guide our Council's work. The development of our 2015-18 strategic plan involved 28 community partner organizations who came together over several months to look at community data, analyze needs and root causes of issues and develop strategies to address those needs. Past plans have been organized around the four domains of early childhood, including Early Care & Education, Family Support, Social, Emotional & Mental Health, and Health Care. For the new plan, the Council still addressed all four domains, but organized the plan around target populations (providers, community members, and families).

## **ECCLC 2015-18 Strategic Goals:**

ECCLC brings community partners together to share knowledge and resources, build expertise, and work collaboratively to accomplish these goals:

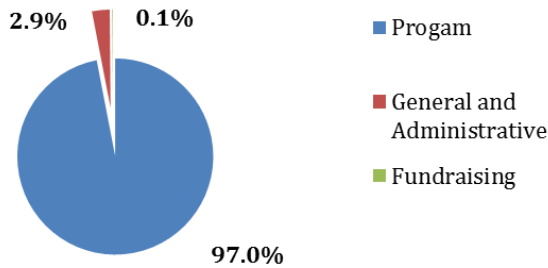
- Support early care and education (ECE) providers in consistently implementing quality practices
- Increase advocacy for the importance of and investment in early childhood
- Support families in accessing resources, education, and services to achieve optimal child growth and development

For more information, download our [2015-2018 Strategic Plan](#).

## Budget and Financials

### 2014-15 Expense

Total Expenses = \$814,496



We deeply appreciate the support provided by the following major funders during our 2014-15 fiscal year:

*Bohemian Foundation*

*Colorado Department of Education*

*Colorado Department of Human Services*

*Colorado Trust Foundation*

*Ida J. Murphy and Russel O. Allen Fund of the  
Community Foundation of Northern Colorado*

*Nordson Corporation Foundation*

*Qualistar Colorado*

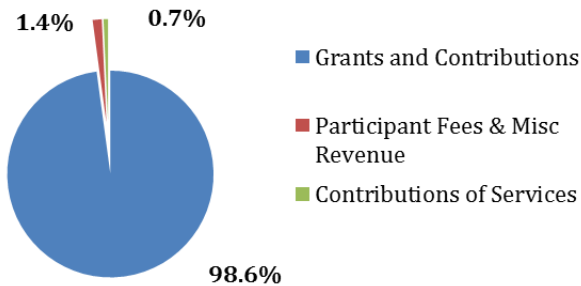
*The Schuster Family Foundation*

*Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation*

Our thanks also go to the many individuals and businesses whose generous contributions supported our mission.

### 2014-15 Revenue

Total Revenue = \$807,183



## Our Board of Directors

As always, we extend our thanks and appreciation to our governing Board of Directors for their many hours of service. Not only do they attend monthly Board meetings, they also serve on various committees in support of our mission.

Heather Griffith, **President**  
*Young People's Learning Center*

Karen Barrett  
*CSU Human Development & Family Studies*

Anne Lance  
*Teaching Tree Early Learning Center*

Mims Harris, **Vice President**  
*Community Member/Consultant*

Samantha Coontz  
*Sunshine House at CSU*

Jane Stuart  
*Occupational Therapist*

Belinda Voit, MD, **Treasurer**  
*Retired Pediatrician/Parent*

Anne Marie Jacobson  
*ECE and EDU, Front Range Community College*

Lisa Andrews, **Secretary**  
*Parent-Child Interaction Center*

Corinne Van Dyke, **Council Liaison**  
*PSD Early Childhood Education  
Program*

Executive Director: Beverly Wood Thurber  
All Board and Staff may be contacted through [www.ecclc.org](http://www.ecclc.org)