



2018-2019

ANNUAL REPORT



EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
OF LARIMER COUNTY

Letter from the President of the Board, Anne Marie Jacobson



As with any healthy, thriving organization, change is inevitable, and the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County is no exception. The most significant change faced by ECCLC this year was the change in leadership with the retirement of our Executive Director, Bev Thurber. The Board of Directors was delighted to offer the position to Christina Taylor, who brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from both the early childhood and public health fields. Thanks to a thoughtful succession planning process, the transition has been a smooth one, with Bev heading off to new adventures knowing ECCLC is well-positioned under Christina’s leadership.

One thing that hasn’t changed is our organization’s commitment to bringing 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.

In this report, you will find details on the Expanding Professional Possibilities in Early Childhood (EPPEC) program, which is addressing the workforce crisis in our community. With a second year of grant funding from Early Milestones Colorado and the City of Fort Collins, EPPEC provides scholarships for early childhood education (ECE) students at Front Range Community College, and facilitates a mentoring model that helps ensure a seamless bridge between the college classroom and workforce.

The work with Be Ready, Directing Change, KIDS, and the Leap Coalition continues, with ECCLC providing a leading role in facilitating the type of systems-building that is needed to support families in our community. In alignment with the 2019-2023 Larimer County Strategic Plan, the Council is embracing opportunities to work with county commissioners and their teams on finding ways to meet the needs for child care in our community.

And beyond all that, the ECCLC continues to provide opportunities for child care provider trainings, support for programs and family child care homes as they move through licensing requirements, and high quality coaching.

Whew! We have a lot to be proud of as an organization. The hard work and dedication of our staff and board cannot be overstated, and it’s an honor to serve as president.

Anne Marie Jacobson, 2018-2019 President, ECCLC Board of Directors

Guiding Principles

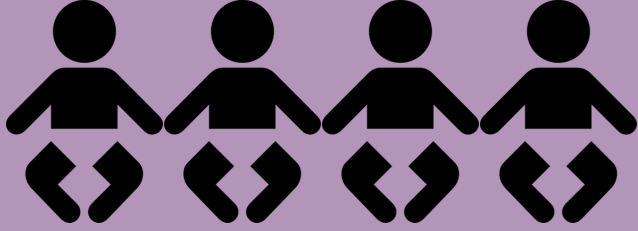
ECCLC strives to be:

- Inclusive
- Innovative
- Action-oriented
- Proactive
- Collaborative
- Supportive
- Connective
- Responsive
- Data informed

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.

Vision: All children in Larimer County are valued, healthy, and thriving.

COMMUNITY MOMENTUM AROUND CHILD CARE



4 infants to every 1 licensed infant spot in Larimer County

Larimer County is facing a crisis in early childhood care and education, with the gap between demand for and supply of licensed child care rapidly increasing. Based on 2019 population estimates, licensed capacity for child care was only 25% of projected demand for infants and toddlers, and only 64% for preschool age children, based on children under age 6 with all parents in the workforce. Our county's population is also rapidly growing. Out of a total population of 332,832, 18,484 (6%) are children under five. Unfortunately, as the population grows, our capacity to serve 0-5 year-olds in licensed early child care is decreasing. Underpinning this capacity crisis is an ongoing struggle to recruit and retain a qualified early childhood workforce.

Our county now has an unprecedented confluence of interest in this issue, with an increased understanding that lack of workforce is a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed before we can make progress in increasing access to care.

The Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force met from June through November 2018, with representation from the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, the City of Fort Collins, Larimer County government, the Bohemian Foundation and the early childhood industry. At the end of the six months, it published a report with seven key recommendations for addressing the lack of child care in our county. Larimer County identified the need for child care in its 2019-2023 Larimer County Strategic Plan, and created a working group to address this goal.

ECCLC sits on the Steering Committee of the **Larimer County Objective 3 Child Care Work Group** with business and early childhood leaders, and this group will be guided, in part, by the recommendations in the Talent 2.0 report. The Larimer County Department of Health and Environment identified access to quality childcare as a goal in the County Health Improvement Plan, and provides technical assistance and staff support to the ECCLC to accomplish this goal. Several other community organizations and partners, including United Way and the City of Fort Collins, have identified child care access as a key challenge facing our community, and have committed to taking action to address this issue in the coming years. ECCLC remains at the forefront of this work, and will continue to convene partners to collaboratively address our collective goals in support of Larimer County children.

CHILD CARE IN LARIMER COUNTY

Recommendations to Address the
Need for Additional Affordable
Child Care in Larimer County

January 2019



A Report by The Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force

WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT

In November 2018, ECCLC conducted its **biannual workforce survey** of licensed child care centers and preschools in Larimer County, which included responses from 93% of all programs. Findings showed that programs experienced a high degree of turnover, with over 50% of programs reporting a turnover of at least one position within the year. Staff turnover often results in an increase in staff/child ratios and in the number of transitions children must make to maintain safe ratios. We also learned that more than half of early childhood providers hired during the year were not fully qualified at the time of hire.

To address the ongoing workforce crisis, ECCLC launched the **Expanding Professional Possibilities in Early Childhood (EPPEC)** partnership in 2018, which focuses on recruiting and retaining a qualified early childhood workforce. Since the launch, we have strengthened our relationships with participating ECE programs, Front Range Community College, the City of Fort Collins, United Way of Larimer County, all three school districts, Larimer Economic and Workforce Development, and the Bohemian Foundation, all of whom have either been partners or community champions of this effort. With the creation of new recruitment marketing materials, a new slogan for EPPEC was designed:



In partnership with seven local child care programs, ECCLC implemented a **Mentor/Cohort Program** under the **EPPEC** project that matched trained mentor teachers with Front Range Community College students who were employed part-time as aides or assistant teachers in the centers, in order to provide quality experiences for people new to or entering the field. We now have a total of 13 highly trained mentor teachers. Eight of the cohort student employees earned the FRCC Foundations of Early Childhood Certificate and six are now fully-qualified Early Childhood Teachers.

We developed guidelines for an **EPPEC High School Apprenticeship** that were enthusiastically endorsed by all three school districts (Poudre, Thompson and Estes Park). The three school districts have been using these materials to recruit both employers and students to join the apprenticeship program.

The **Provisional Early Childhood Teacher (P-ECT) Waiver**, which allows teachers to work in a child care program as a lead Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) for up to a year while complete their ECT requirements, was approved by Colorado's Early Childhood Leadership Commission in September 2018. During the first year, we had four active participants in the waiver, and eight programs that have been approved to employ P-ECTs. The very first program to participate in this waiver was able to re-open a toddler classroom that had been closed for almost two years due to lack of staff. The program was able to enroll four additional children from the community, and move children from other classrooms, positively impacting both staff/child ratios and community capacity for toddler care.

We developed a **Career Pathways** graphic for use by early childhood professionals, which shows the different careers in the field and offers support in navigating the complex licensing systems. The ECCLC also provides individual career pathways advice for any interested ECE professionals who contact the ECCLC, including assistance navigating licensing qualifications, the Early Childhood Credential 2.0 system, and higher education options. Additionally, we worked hard to recruit and support family child care providers through the licensing process, who are a vital part of the early childhood system in our community.

PARTNERSHIPS TO ENSURE QUALITY TRAININGS

The Early Childhood Council of Larimer County offered a total of 19 trainings this year, many through partnerships with other local and state agencies. Collaborating with these entities helps ECCLC continuously provide quality professional development opportunities to ECE providers.

- With grant support from CDHS, **Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth (SAFY)** developed a training on multigenerational trauma with the Child Trauma & Resilience Assessment Center (CTRAC) at CSU. ECCLC, CTRAC, and SAFY partnered to offer this training to ECE providers.
- In June, ECCLC hosted *Cultural Relevance & Toxic Stress in Infancy & Early Childhood*, a training for early education/intervention providers working with children of color in Larimer County. **The Family Center/La Familia** and One Health Institute at CSU developed the curriculum and trained community trainers, with a grant from the Health Disparities Grant Program (HDGP). ECCLC hosted three trainings, one specifically for the Licensed Family Child Care Association in Loveland. All trainings were conducted in Spanish and translated into English via interpreters.
- **Qualistar** presented Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO), a hands-on workshop covering best practices for designing outdoor learning environments for young children.
- **Cooking Matters** was held in January, and is a CDE-approved training that teaches early childhood professionals about healthy meal preparation and creating a positive food environment for the children in their care.
- **Voices Carry Child Advocacy Center** presented a community training on Nurturing Healthy Sexual Development. This training focuses on ages 0-teen and was attended by ECE providers and other human service providers.

The 15th annual **After School Zone Conference** was held on September 29, 2019 with 120 attendees. The Conference featured two keynote presentations: “Inside the Student is a Child,” presented by Connor Long, Disability Rights Advocate; and “Learning Outside Traditional Spaces,” presented by William Anderson, Culturally Responsive Educator. Sixteen hands-on and interactive workshops were also offered on science, connecting kids to nature, trauma and resilience, art, music, active programming, teaching social emotional skills, responding to child sexual abuse, group management strategies, cooking, cultural competence, and drama.



COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND PARTNERS



Leap Coalition

WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN'S
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LARIMER COUNTY

This year, the **Leap Coalition** continued to build on its dual goals to support our early childhood workforce and to strengthen connections among early childhood professionals in our community.

- Leap hosted its 2nd Annual Community Conversation Starter, “Checking our Biases: Meaningful and Authentic Engagement with Children and Families,” featuring national guest speaker Luis Hernandez. Nearly 400 participants attended the event over two days. This event was followed by a series of six “Community Conversations” on a variety of topics related to infant mental health and cultural consciousness. In total, Leap events provided over 2,265 hours of training to 486 unduplicated individuals, representing 73 organizations across Larimer County.
- Working in collaboration with the Health District of Larimer County, Leap recruited 24 mental health professionals from around the community to participate in “Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood (DC: 0-5™)”, a daylong training for mental health professionals.
- Leap contracted with Sheryl Heller, Ph.D., Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Tulane University, to provide a two-day Reflective Supervision training for 40 supervisors of frontline early childhood professionals. Dr. Heller provided six ongoing reflective practice sessions to a group of eight individuals from the training, who then facilitated meetings with smaller groups in their respective fields.

To learn more about these and other Leap accomplishments, please visit the Leap Coalition’s new [website](#) and download the full Leap [annual report](#).





Be Ready is a countywide collaboration that supports ready children, ready families, ready schools, and a ready community—so that all children in Larimer County will be ready for school. Highlights this year include:

- Be Ready launched a brand new, mobile-friendly [website](#) that contains an informative calendar, blog articles, and a list of helpful resources.
- Be Ready Family Fun Fairs were held in Fort Collins in September 2018 (366 attendees, 114 families), Loveland in February 2019 (400 attendees, 147 families), and Estes Park in April 2019 (155 attendees, 47 families). These free family events provide community resources, activities for kids, book giveaways, and preschool information.
- Ready, Set, Kindergarten Guides: Distributed 6,400 English and 1,700 Spanish language guides and surveyed parents who used the guide to prepare their child for kindergarten. Be Ready also expanded outreach to physicians' offices who distributed the guide to families at 4-year-old wellness visits.



Estes Valley Investment in Childhood Success (EVICS)

is a long-time partner of ECCLC, providing support to families and early childhood education providers in Estes Park for 14 years. In April 2019, EVICS received membership with the Colorado Family Resource Center Association (FRCA), becoming the second Family Resource Center (FRC) in Larimer County, along with The Family Center / La Familia in Fort Collins. While the mission and core services at EVICS remain early childhood support, the FRC designation and larger office space accommodates a growing staff, and expansion of wrap-around services for families. The EVICS Family Resource Center is located at 1182 Graves Avenue, Unit A, Estes Park. More information can be found at:

www.evics.org



Kids Initiative for Developmental Support (KIDS) is a coalition of child-serving organizations dedicated to ensuring that all Larimer County children's healthy development (including social-emotional) is optimized by a coordinated system that supports informed parents/caregivers, universal standardized developmental screening, and effective referrals. Highlights from [KIDS](#) this year include:

- Attended 6 family outreach fairs including:
 - Thompson Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) Fair
 - Be Ready Fairs in Fort Collins, Loveland, and Estes Park
 - CSU Employee Fair
 - Preschool Fair
 - NOCO Family Festival
- Handed out 290 Milestone Moments books to families and community partners.
- Provided outreach visits at 11 physician's offices, including materials and information about developmental screening, social emotional information, referrals, and resources.
- Provided developmental monitoring and referral information and materials to ECE coaches and Nurse Consultants, and to early care and learning partners who attended the Preschool Fair and the Be Ready Fair in Estes Park.
- Presented KIDS materials to the following partners:

◦ Prenatal Plus	◦ Early Childhood staff, Poudre School District
◦ Nurse-Family Partnership	◦ The Matthews House
◦ Childbirth Educators	◦ DHS-Family Mentor supervisors (Jacobs Center, Turning Point, The Matthews House)
◦ Ferguson High School	◦ Fort Collins Doula Association

ADVISORY COUNCIL



In April, our Early Childhood Advisory Council meeting featured Speak Up for Kids in Larimer County, with a focus on county governance structure, policy, and advocacy. This luncheon was a collaborative effort with Directing Change and the Colorado Children's Campaign. Larimer County Commissioners and other county leaders joined us for this discussion of local early childhood issues.

ECCLC has been continuing to embed cultural consciousnesses into Advisory Council meetings on topics such as race, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Cultural Consciousness Committee has utilized videos, small groups, and lived experiences to begin conversations around these topics.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

This year we experienced some big staff changes at ECCLC. Judy Seybold, a longtime Quality Support Coach, moved on at the end of June after 15 years with ECCLC. Bev Thurber retired after 11 years as Executive Director. We are so grateful for their service to our organization and wish them both well as they explore new activities and more time with loved ones.

Our new Executive Director, Christina Taylor, joined ECCLC in May with more than 10 years of experience in management, public health, evaluation, and community outreach.

With a Master of Public Health degree, Christina previously served as the Women and Infant Health Program Manager for the State of Wyoming.



BY THE NUMBERS

Professional Development and Workforce

- **70** scholarships awarded totaling **\$55,997**
- **11** mentors trained
- **4** Provisional Early Childhood Teachers participated in waiver
- **48** job postings on new job board, **2600** page views
- **138** ECE professionals received Early Childhood Credentials through PDIS
- **221.75** hours of training provided, with **347** attendees

Quality Support Services

- **\$149,286** in direct QI funding support
- **1115** hours of direct (face-to-face) coaching
- **78** child care program participants

Recruitment of Family Child Care Homes

- **4** recruitment information sessions
- **115** expressed interest, **23** attended information sessions; **9** new individuals seeking support to become licensed
- **8** completed the licensing process
- **\$2,064** invested to pay fees for licensure and pre-service training

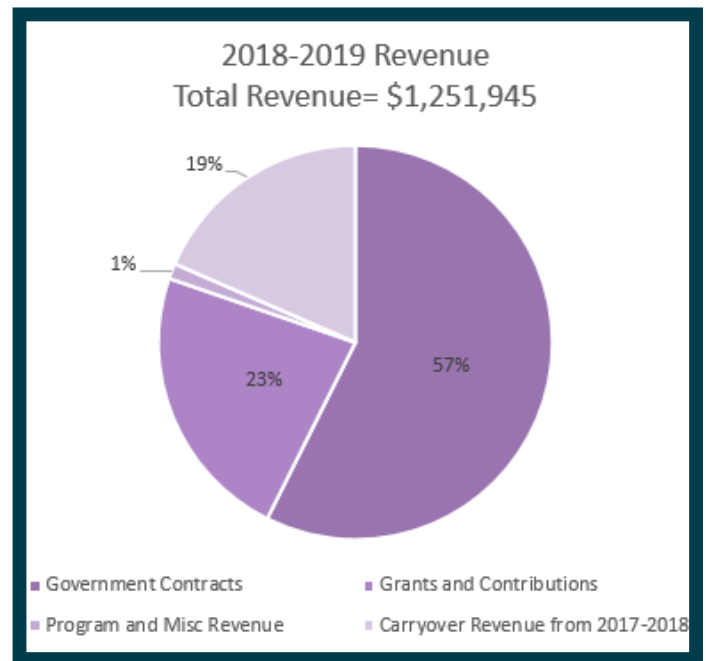
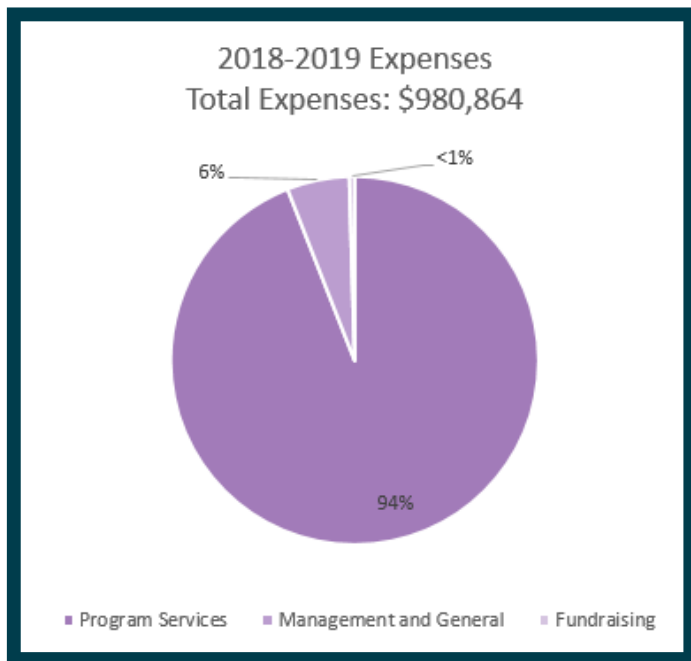
Volunteers

- **193** volunteers
- Donated over **3,000** hours of time
- Valued at **\$84,060¹**

Advisory Council

- **157** unduplicated community partners and organizations attended Advisory Council meetings

FINANCIALS AND BOARD



We deeply appreciate the support provided by the following major funders during our 2019 fiscal year:

Anonymous Private Foundation

Bohemian Foundation

Buell Foundation

City of Fort Collins

Early Milestones Colorado

Public-Private Partnership Funders: Gary Community Investments, Buell Foundation, Colorado

Department of Education & Colorado Department of Human Services

Fiscal Sponsor: Rose Community Foundation

Elevations Foundation

Larimer County

Office of Early Childhood, Colorado Department of Human Services

Tony Gramscas Youth Services Program, Colorado Department of Human Services

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

Our 2018-2019 Board of Directors

As always, we extend our thanks and appreciation to our governing Board of Directors for their many hours of service. The President may be contacted through www.ecclc.org.

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Karen Rattenborg – Vice President
Kristin Kurbjun – Treasurer
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