

# Early Childhood Council of Larimer County

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ANNUAL REPORT  
2019/2020



# Letter from the President of the Board, Anne Marie Jacobson



Last year when I wrote a piece for the annual report, I commented on it being a year of changes. How little I knew! This year has been a time of unprecedented challenges. As an organization, we are blessed to be well positioned to respond and be of service to the community. The board of directors continues to be grateful for the ECCLC team and our Executive Director Christina Taylor for her exceptional leadership.

Any good organization recognizes the need to be agile and nimble, which means finding ways to capitalize on opportunities for operational excellence. Throughout the year we have welcomed the arrival of several new staff members and the restructuring of key leadership positions within the organization, which has allowed the ECCLC to do just that.

In the fall, the council engaged in a collaborative process to ensure our strategic plan works toward fulfilling our vision that *all children in Larimer County are valued, healthy and thriving*. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in the spring, the ECCLC was able to do what it does best by responding to the needs of the community. From distributing needed supplies to local child care providers, shifting training and coaching to remote platforms, to state advocacy, the ECCLC is in our community making a difference.

The ECCLC board is also making some key changes to dismantle systems of white supremacy and promote equity, including increasing board diversity and forming the Advancing Equity committee to ensure issues of social justice are central to our work. We recognize that these are only first steps in what will be a long-term effort.

It's been an honor to serve in the role of Board President these past two years and with my tenure coming to end, I look forward to continuing the work of this outstanding organization as a board member.

**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.

## Guiding Principles

ECCLC strives to be:

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

# COVID-19 Impact and Response

In March 2020, COVID-19 changed nearly every aspect of our lives, almost immediately resulting in unemployment, business closures, resource shortages, and a sense of hopelessness. Essential workers were thrown into a confusing and dizzying new landscape, and the early care and education (ECE) sector was no exception. Accessing supplies was nearly impossible, health guidelines were confusing, and many ECE providers felt alone and overlooked.



ECCLC staff rallied together to support each other and respond to the new demands in our community. We formed an ECE Recovery Task Force to prioritize our emergency response and manage the many new obstacles facing families and early educators. It was incredibly inspiring to see each of us step into new roles and mobilize quickly to help our community.

We reached out by phone and email to as many ECE providers as we could; reassuring and listening to their struggles, and generating a list of necessary supplies. The sheer amount of supplies and personal protective equipment gathered and distributed was truly amazing to see and be a part of. We were able to personally deliver care packages to all corners of the county, and later establish efficient drive-by pick-ups to address the needs of our ECE providers.

We added a COVID-19 resource page to our website with information for providers regarding sanitation and face covering guidance, operations, small business support, and our own supplemental information packet. We included links to other resources for tackling broader issues, such as hunger and housing issues, unemployment, mental health, and guides for parents.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many things, but the need for training and coaching for providers persists. Our coaching staff has continued to support providers through Zoom, phone, email, and socially distanced in-person meetings. We applied or advocated for more than \$500,000 in funding to support emergency needs, child care tuition and ongoing ECE operations, which was distributed both through ECCLC and our partners.

It hasn't been easy, but we are proud of ECCLC's response. We're more skilled, stronger, and committed than before to serve our community in every way we can.



# By The Numbers



## COVID Supplies Distributed

- 3000 adult masks & 300 child masks
- 13,000 diapers
- 1,000 cans of baby formula
- 20 gallons of hand sanitizer
- 400 boxes of gloves
- 900 gallons of hand soap
- 2,500 rolls of paper towels
- 3,600 rolls of toilet paper
- 180 gallons of bleach



## Professional Development

- 52 scholarships awarded totaling \$58,730
- 16 mentors trained
- 7 Participants in P-ECT Waiver
- 92 ECE professionals received Early Childhood Credentials through PDIS
- 215.5 hours of training provided, with 570 attendees



## Quality Support

- \$147,587 in direct QI funding support
- 960 hours of direct coaching hours



## Family Child Care Recruitment

- 3 recruitment information sessions
- 4 new individuals sought support
- 3 completed the licensing process
- \$1,225 invested in fees for licensure and pre-service training



## Advisory Council & Volunteers

- 81 community partners, representing 43 different organizations, attended Advisory Council Meetings
- 192 volunteers donated over 1,700 hours of time valued at \$50,150

Supported  
59 Child Care  
Programs



## Leap Coalition

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

**The Leap Coalition** is a community-wide initiative working to enhance infant and early childhood mental health services (I-EMCH) in Larimer County. The year began in September 2019, with nearly 200 early childhood professionals attending Leap's 3rd Annual Community Conversation Starter, "The Biology of Adversity and Resilience: A two-generation perspective on risk and opportunity," featuring Dr. Sarah Watamura. Several Community Conversations followed over the next several months featuring experts in the field, including Jean Cimino from Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health, the Colorado Children's Campaign, and Dr. Noelle Hause.

Also in the fall, the Coalition worked with community stakeholders to develop Leap's 2020-25 strategic plan. ECCLC was also able to secure grants from the Larimer County Behavioral Health Services and a private foundation to support two cohorts of early childhood professionals who applied for the Infant Mental Health Endorsement with Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health (COAIMH). In spring 2020, Leap hosted the Colorado Foundations of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health course for 30 participants free of charge. Due to COVID-19, this course was successfully shifted to an online platform. Leap's entire 2019 annual report can be found [here](#).



## Expanding Professional Possibilities in Early Childhood (EPPEC)

The EPPEC program pairs experienced early childhood educators as mentors to prospective or existing child care providers. Our second year of the EPPEC program included a Fall and Spring cohort with 16 students and 20 mentors. The students enrolled in early childhood education classes at Front Range Community College while being employed at a center and paired with a mentor. Meanwhile, the mentors went through a training course (24 total hours) that covered topics such as building relationships, cultural consciousness, work style differences, mentoring skills, and giving and receiving feedback. Mentors were also involved in Community of Practice meetings where they worked on their mentoring skills with other professionals in the field. Mentors shared that serving as a mentor contributed to a renewed confidence in their career and experience, that they enjoyed building relationships and sharing their knowledge with other educators. In addition to the success of the mentor/student cohort, our Provisional Early Childhood Teacher waiver was granted a two year extension by the Early Childhood Leadership Commission, allowing providers to work within programs while finishing their ECT credentials.



## National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day, May 8, 2020

This annual event is a special day set aside to recognize child care providers for their dedication to providing quality care and for the meaningful role they play in our children's future. This year it took on special significance, as many providers were forced to close during the COVID-19 shutdown, while others struggled to stay open to serve essential workers. To celebrate their work, we ran a prize giveaway via Facebook, for Larimer County Child Care Providers the entire week of May 4-8. Over \$4,100 in gift cards were given away, to 200 providers in our community.

The Larimer County Board of Commissioners declared May 12, 2020 our local Child Care Provider Appreciation Day. ECCLC was invited to present at the County Commissioner meeting in May, and shared more about our local child care programs and providers, including the myriad reasons why this field is so important to our local families and community.

*"Everyone Depends on Someone who Depends on Child Care."*

## Cultural Consciousness Focus at Council Meetings

As a guiding principle of the ECCLC, we are committed to integrating cultural consciousness in our work and continually advocating for equity across the early childhood system. We are committed to doing this work internally with our staff, and externally with our Early Childhood Advisory Council, our Board of Directors and our early childhood programs. This year, the Early Childhood Advisory Council's monthly meetings have included a focus on cultural consciousness on topics such as race, equity, diversity and inclusion, stereotypes, cultural identities, communication challenges, and microaggressions.

# Quality Trainings

## 16th Annual After School Zone Conference

Our annual conference was held on November 16, 2019 in Loveland, CO with more than 100 professionals working with school-aged children in after school and out of school programs. The conference drew attendees from across the Front Range.

Keynote speakers were Becky Keigan, Buell Early Childhood Leadership Network Alumni Director, and Sarah Weeks, Impact and Education Director for the OtterCares Foundation. Participants chose from concurrent workshops throughout the day focused on the whole child, to ensure that each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, setting the stage for long-term student success.

This was the last ASZ conference that will be hosted by the ECCLC. Future work to support school-age providers will be done in partnership with other local and state youth serving partners.



## Confident and Resourceful Infants & Toddlers Training (CRIT)

The Confident and Resourceful Infants and Toddlers (CRIT) training was created by ECCLC Coach Heather Soderberg as part of our continued effort to provide professionals with specialized information specifically about children birth to three years of age. This training is based on the philosophy of renowned early childhood specialists Emmi Pikler and Magda Gerber. This 12-hour training was offered between January 2020 and June 2020. We trained 12 early childhood professionals in 4 sessions throughout the year, one of which was offered virtually due to the pandemic.



## Expanding Quality for Infants & Toddlers (EQIT)

EQIT is offered twice annually to support professionals who are currently working or will be working with children ages 0-3 years. Ten participants took part in the fall session, held between August and November 2019. The spring session began in January 2020 with 15 participants completing six modules before the COVID-19 pandemic closed our office. The EQIT team shifted to a virtual platform during the shutdown. With support for the Office of Early Childhood, the spring course was completed in June, with 12 participants receiving their state-issued EQIT certificate.

## Community Partners



**Be Ready** is a county-wide collaboration that supports children, families, schools, and the community, so that all children in Larimer County enter school ready to learn. United Way and KIDS partners also work closely to integrate parent messaging through outreach at family fairs. Approximately 4,500 English and 900 Spanish Ready, Set, Kindergarten! guides were distributed to families.



The **Kids Initiative for Developmental Support (KIDS)** is a collaboration of professionals 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 screenings, and effective referrals. KIDS partners reached out to more than 19 medical clinics with information about screening and referrals, and distributed 100 physician information packets.

KIDS set up booths at 21 fairs, distributing information to over 700 families. KIDS partners reached out through 13 different forums, including two trainings for 25 ECE providers around screening and referral, a training with child care nurse health consultants, preschool fairs, an ECCLC Advisory Council meeting, and three LEAP Community Conversations with more than 500 attendees.

# 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

ECCLC's strategic planning process, completed in January 2020, is a highly collaborative, multi-month process that incorporates input from Advisory Council members, ECCLC staff, and our Board of Directors. The plan was also released for a community open comment period prior to being finalized. The plan reflects the priorities of Larimer County's early childhood community, with a focus on the work supported by ECCLC staff in collaboration with community partners and stakeholders.

## Strategic Plan Goals:

- Broaden and diversify a qualified and well-compensated early childhood workforce.
- Increase the number of families that can access and afford quality child care.
- Elevate and support community involvement and investment in quality early childhood experiences.
- Collaborate with families and community organizations to address and break down barriers to accessing services.
- Support infant and early childhood mental health and social emotional development.

[Click here](#) to view the entire plan!

## Looking Ahead

As you've read in this report, it has been a challenging year marked by struggle, growth, and resilience. I cannot say enough about the incredible ECCLC team and the amazing work that they do to support our community. I am so grateful for the honor of leading this team and despite this challenging year, I feel optimistic about our future. Partners across the County came together through this past year in ways we've never seen before. Collaboration and sharing of resources have helped us work together to tackle a variety of community needs. ECCLC is stronger than ever, and as the need for quality early care and education grows, our work within this sector will grow with it. We have big goals for the future.



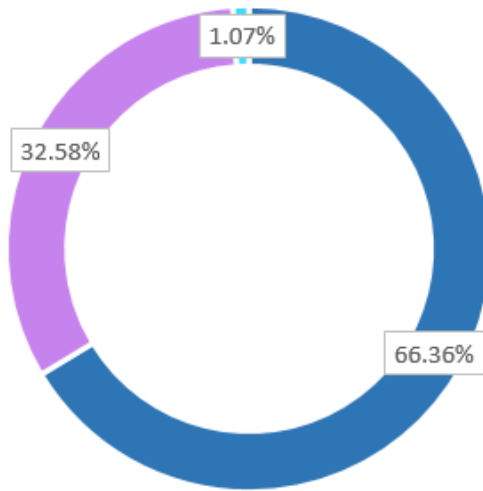
2020 shone a bright light on the need for stable, quality early education for children and families, and we intend to carry that lesson into ambitious action as we move forward.

**Christina N. Taylor, MPH – ECCLC Executive Director**

# Financials

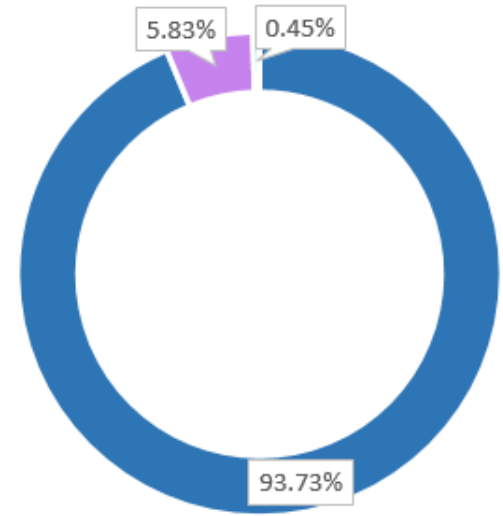
## 2019-2020 Revenue

- Government Contracts
- Grants and Contributions
- Program and Misc Revenue



## 2019-2020 Expenses

- Program Services
- Management and General
- Fundraising



**We deeply appreciate the support provided by the following major funders during our 2019/2020 fiscal year:**

- Anonymous Private Foundation
- Bohemian Foundation
- Buell Foundation
- City of Fort Collins
- Early Milestones Colorado
- Elevations Foundation
- Nordson Corporation Foundation
- Women's Foundation of Colorado COVID Relief
- Larimer County Department of Human Services
- Office of Early Childhood, Colorado Department of Human Services
- Tony Grampas Youth Services Program, Colorado Department of Human Services
- NOCO COVID Relief Fund: Community Foundation of Northern Colorado and United Way of Larimer County

## 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](http://www.ecclc.org).

Anne Marie Jacobson - President	Karen McMahon
Karen Rattenborg - Vice President	Queen
Samantha Coontz - Secretary	Brandy Simmers
Kristin Kurbjun - Treasurer	Arthur Spicciati
Lisa Auer - Council Liaison	Averil Strand
Caroline Bunn	Jane Stuart
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