

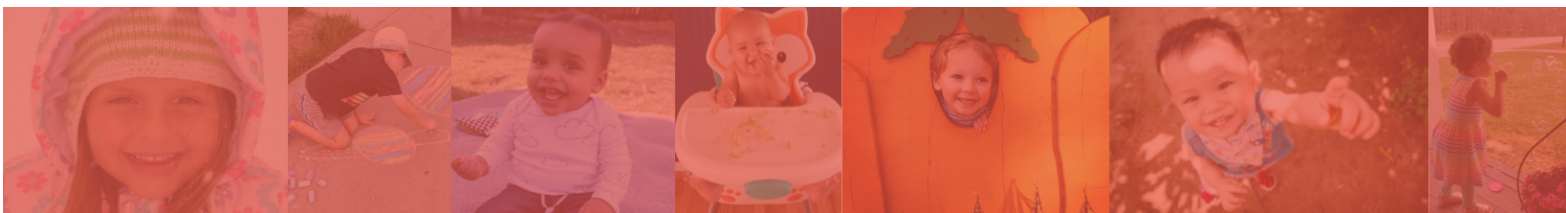
Early Childhood Council

of LARIMER COUNTY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

APPROVED: January 2020

Updated: May 2021



ECCLC VISION

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

ECCLC 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.

ECCLC GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Early Childhood Council of Larimer County:

- Builds leadership capacity to perpetually improve quality early childhood services for all families.
- Works to reduce duplication of efforts.
- Incubates innovative ideas that support the mission of the ECCLC.
- Provides technical assistance and expertise related to early childhood (prenatal to age 8).
- Designs and pilots programs and supports community initiatives aimed at improving early childhood systems.
- Provides management services for ECCLC initiated projects, when appropriate.
- Takes risks and learns from failures.
- Coordinates efforts to attain sustainable funding and supports inter-agency and inter-disciplinary grant writing efforts.
- Provides oversight and quality accountability in programs for which ECCLC acts as fiscal agent.
- Provides a forum for information sharing among agencies.
- Offers a central problem solving opportunity or forum.
- Respects parental (or family) choice, personal and cultural.
- Commits to integrating cultural consciousness in ECCLC work and continually advocating for equity across the early childhood system.

It is the intent of the ECCLC to complement, not compete for funding or programs with other agencies.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

PURPOSE

The ECCLC strategic 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.

TIME FRAME

ECCLC engages in 5-year planning cycles, with annual reviews and updates in order to remain responsive to evolving community needs and priorities.

DATA-DRIVEN

- The planning process starts with an analysis of community needs, and is informed by the data that are collected through ECCLC's Evaluation Plan. Data include, but are not limited to, demographic data, child care data, and child health data.
- Data are analyzed and evaluated by the Advisory Board, using a "Factor Analysis" framework from the Results-Based Accountability approach.
- In accordance with ECCLC's Evaluation Plan, data are also reviewed annually as part of the review and update process.

COMMUNITY INPUT AND DECISION MAKING

- ECCLC's planning process is a highly collaborative, multi-month process, which incorporates input from Advisory Council members, ECCLC staff, and the ECCLC Board of Directors. The ECCLC also released the strategic plan for public comment prior to full adoption.
- The Advisory Council presents a recommended plan to the ECCLC Board of Directors, which has final decision making authority to adopt or modify the strategic plan.

*Throughout this plan, the Talent 2.0 Logo is used to identify goals and strategies that align with the recommendations of the Talent 2.0 Child Care Taskforce that were released in January 2019.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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

Goal 1: Broaden and diversify a qualified and well-compensated early childhood workforce.

- A. Support recruitment and retention of a qualified early childhood workforce.
 - i. Between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2025, recruit at least 20 new family child care providers into the field through recruitment events, licensing navigation and financial support.
 - ii. On an annual basis, support at least 50 prospective and current ECE providers with scholarships for higher education.
 - iii. On an annual basis, support at least 75 current and prospective ECE providers with career navigation support, including support with licensing, credentialing and the Professional Development Information System (PDIS).
 - iv. By June 30, 2022, pilot an online ECCLC training series, to increase access to professional development for ECE providers.
 - v. By June 30, 2023, establish a range of options for child care for participants of ECCLC training sessions and meetings, to support equity of access to professional development.

- B. Explore local priorities of the early childhood workforce and innovative models to address compensation and other needs.
 - i. By March 1, 2022 redesign and deploy a workforce survey that comprehensively captures local workforce needs, including recruitment and retention challenges.
 - ii. By June 30, 2022, use the results of the workforce survey to identify workforce priorities for year 2 of the ECCLC strategic plan.
 - iii. By June 30, 2021, establish a cross-sector work group to explore potential shared-service models for early care and education in Larimer County.
 - iv. By June 30, 2021, establish a cross-sector work group to explore the creation of an ECE provider substitute pool to support ECE programs and family child care homes in providing quality care and maintaining staff ratios in times of transition.

- C. Advocate for increased clarity and timeliness of the qualification process for early childhood professionals.
 - i. On an ongoing basis, continue participating in workforce advocacy at the state-level in order to support policies that streamline the qualification process for early care and education providers.

- ii. By December 31, 2020, establish a plan to improve, expand and scale the Expanding Professional Possibilities in Early Childhood (EPPEC) project in Larimer County to ensure ongoing ECE workforce development support.

Goal 2: Increase the number of families that can access and afford quality child care.

- A. Support early care and education providers in consistently implementing quality practices.
 - i. By June 30, 2023, at least 60% of licensed ECE programs in Larimer County will be engaged with the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (engagement is defined as Level 2 or higher).
 - ii. By June 30, 2023, at least 27% of licensed ECE programs in Larimer County eligible for a quality rating will have a Colorado Shines rating of Level 3 or higher, with coaching, professional development opportunities and quality improvement support from the ECCLC.
 - iii. At least once a month, promote Colorado Shines and Early Learning and Development Guidelines (ELDG) to ECE providers through the e-newsletter, provider email list and/or ECCLC Facebook page.
 - iv. On an ongoing basis, maintain a section of the ECCLC website with information about Colorado Shines, with a prominent link on the website homepage.

- B. Increase and diversify child care support across sectors and funding partners to ensure families have access to immediate, temporary, or long-term assistance.
 - i. By June 30, 2021, in partnership with United Way of Larimer County, explore successful models for business support of family friendly workplace policies and child care access, and identify a plan for local advocacy efforts.
 - ii. By June 30, 2023, identify funding sources to establish emergency assistance for child care costs, including enrollment fees, tuition, and other immediate child care needs, in order to support continuity of care.
 - iii. By June 30, 2023, maintain the percentage of children (at least 80%) receiving CCAP subsidies that are being served in high-quality programs.

- C. Support alternative types of child care in implementing quality practices to expand access to quality care in the community.
 - i. By June 30, 2021, collaborate with Larimer County and partners to explore potential models of support for exempt care providers.



Goal 3: Elevate and support community involvement and investment in quality early childhood experiences.

- A. Build advocates across sectors and the community who are willing to invest in early childhood as part of the overall continuum of education.
 - i. By June 30, 2022, compile and distribute an early childhood advocacy toolkit to a broad range of community members and organizations in Larimer County.
 - ii. On an annual basis, provide at least one (1) in-person opportunity for community involvement in advocacy efforts for early childhood issues.
 - iii. On an annual basis, organize a fall “Give to Kids” campaign through Colorado Gives to promote donations to child-serving organizations in Larimer County.
 - iv. By early 2022, explore the inclusion of an early childhood subsidization tax proposal on a Larimer County ballot.

- B. Strengthen awareness of the impact of the early years (prenatal to age 8) on a broad range of community outcomes.
 - i. By June 30, 2021, establish a contract to collect data and create/distribute a comprehensive public information campaign on early childhood issues including, but not limited to, those that impact families, workforce, economy and business, and long-term societal outcomes.
 - ii. By December 31, 2021, develop messaging for normalizing the use and promoting the benefit of early childhood resources and services for all young children.



Goal 4: Collaborate with families and community organizations to address and break down barriers to accessing services.

- A. Include family voice and lived experiences to ensure resources and services are community-driven.
 - i. By June 30, 2021, partner with community stakeholders to establish ECCLC policy guidelines for board, committees and task force participation that incorporate intentional inclusion of family voice and lived experience in program planning.

- B. Support and advocate for accessible and equitable services for all children and families.
 - i. By December 31, 2021, collaborate with local child-serving agencies and partners to expand and support at least one (1) cultural consciousness training for service providers, to promote equitable access to resources for families in our community.
 - ii. On an ongoing basis, continue to provide support and staff time, in partnership with United Way of Larimer County, for the Larimer Be Ready Campaign, to support kindergarten readiness and access to resources for families in our community.
 - iii. On an ongoing basis, support the work of the Kids Initiative for Developmental Screening (KIDS) with staff time and facilitation assistance, to promote early intervention screening and referrals for Larimer County children.

- C. Increase professionals' cross-domain knowledge of up-to-date services and resources.
 - i. On an ongoing basis, participate in community coalitions aimed at connecting children, families and professionals to community resources, in order to enhance referral networks.
 - ii. On an annual basis, provide a minimum of two (2) opportunities for Larimer County nonprofits that serve local families to share information at ECCLC Advisory Council meetings, to increase community knowledge of available resources.

Goal 5: Support infant and early childhood mental health and social emotional development.

- A. Support early care and education providers in implementing quality practices that promote the positive social emotional development of young children.
 - i. Annually support ECE providers with at least two (2) training opportunities on practices and/or environments that promote social emotional well-being for the children they serve.
 - ii. By December 31, 2022, collaborate with the KIDS Initiative, and other partners to offer at least one (1) training to ECE providers on developmental screening and challenging behaviors.

- B. Build and support a robust and well-connected early childhood workforce in Larimer County with specific expertise in infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH), health equity, and knowledge of local resources.
 - i. By July 2025, there will be at least 50 early childhood professionals in Larimer County with the Colorado Association of Infant Mental Health (COAIMH) Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health® (IMH-E or “the endorsement”).
 - ii. By July 2025, build a pool of at least 10 COAIMH-endorsed reflective supervision/consultation (RS/C) providers in Larimer County who can provide COAIMH’s required RS/C hours for those seeking the IMH-E.
 - iii. On an ongoing basis, identify funding opportunities to expand access to infant and early childhood mental health consultation services in a wide range of settings where additional supports are needed.
 - iv. By January 2021, connect with local higher education institutions to explore options for enhancing IECMH-specific career pathways, including expanded internship and mentoring opportunities with local IECMH providers.
 - v. By January 2022, explore options to incentivize IECMH workforce recruitment and retention, including scholarships and training subsidies in exchange for a time commitment to service in Larimer County.
 - vi. At least four times per year, provide free or low-cost professional development opportunities for family service professionals in Larimer County to increase IECMH knowledge and expertise, build professional connections, and share information.

- C. Increase community understanding of early childhood development, with an emphasis on the long-term societal impact of early childhood experiences.
 - i. By July 2022, establish a workgroup to explore new ways to engage with parents and caregivers in order to increase their understanding of early childhood development; the relationship between trauma, challenging behaviors, race, and bias; and how to access support when concerns arise.
 - ii. By July 2025, increase caregiver understanding of the long-term negative impacts of preschool suspension and expulsion (including the “preschool to prison pipeline”) in an effort to mitigate these practices.

- D. Support a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach to prevention, early identification and intervention for mental health concerns in young children.

- i. On an ongoing basis, work in collaboration with the ECCLC's early childhood coaches to support ECE providers in consistently implementing quality practices that support IECMH, and provide tools for understanding and mitigating challenging behaviors.
 - ii. On an ongoing basis, according to community need, work with local family and child serving agencies to identify training needs and provide targeted workforce supports to increase IECMH knowledge and expertise.
- E. A multi-generational approach is utilized in all mental health and substance use prevention and treatment work in Larimer County, with a strong focus on providing wrap-around support for the children and families of primary adult consumers.
- i. On an ongoing basis, provide outreach and training to increase awareness and understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), including the immediate and long-term physical, mental, behavioral, and societal consequences.
 - ii. On an ongoing basis, according to community need, support partner agencies in identifying where their programs intersect with the ACEs landscape and provide recommendations for how they can intervene to support the children of primary adult consumers.
 - iii. On an ongoing basis, according to community need, provide technical support and consultation for partner agencies in reviewing, designing, implementing, and/or expanding programs and policies focused on disrupting the intergenerational impact of trauma.
 - iv. On an ongoing basis, work in collaboration with community partners to provide support and technical assistance to physicians and other professional community designated screeners. Include referral resources and culturally-appropriate information for how to talk to a parent when there is a concern.
 - v. By July 2023, explore examples of successful community programs utilizing an ACEs screening tool, and generate recommendations for a tool or program that could be piloted in Larimer County.
 - vi. By July 2022, connect with a HealThy Steps representative to learn more about the model. Determine if this model for integrated behavioral/physical care would be appropriate for development in Larimer County.