



**Pueblo Early  
Childhood Council**

# MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 2023 HYBRID VIA WEBEX

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## Mission Statement

Pueblo Early Childhood Council is a diverse, active network that collaborates and advocates to enrich and strengthen the lives of children, families, and the community.

### Attendance:

Emilee Lopez-SCCOHS	Katrina Appel-Colorado BlueSky
Gina Wilburn-DHS	Natalie Sparks-Kinderkirk
Teresa Mathews-PECC/Children First	Brenda Rodriguez-ESCCC
Brenda Rodriguez-PECC/Children First	Angie Shehorn-PECC/Children First
Rebecca Bellavia-PECC/Children First	Angie Rogers-ELV
Dwanette Martinez-Migrant Education/D70	Maricela Palma-ECEMS@CSU
Frankie Boone-DHS-CCCAP	Berlinda Perdo-OJC/Head Start
Rhonda Dusky-Kochis-SCCOHS	Angelina Perdo-OJC/Head Start
Matt Guy-PECC/Common Thread Group	Rita Samora-ECEMS@CSU
Kevin Barkocy-Academy Kids Vision	Darla Hall-PECC/Children First
Wendy Romero-The Learning Tree/Health Solutions	Tracy Williams-PCC
Paula Arellano-Children First	Jennifer Walters-Children First
Joe Bellavia-Children First	Cindy Keasling-D70
Molly Milusnic-ECE@PCC	

**I. Introduction: Meeting called to order by Matt at 11:04 am.**

**I. Additions to the Agenda: N/A**

**II. Approval of Minutes: July 2023**

**III. Agency Highlight-None**

**IV. New Business:**

**A. SECC**

Matt Guy- Community Mobilizer (Common Thread Group)

Matt stated the parent coalition (meeting for over the last six months) has two upcoming items they are requesting the Early Childhood Council and childcare providers participate in. Matt stated the first item is a conversation regarding accurate information where parents can find activities for their children. He stated a confidential survey will go out through Survey Monkey or paper copies can be obtained through September 15<sup>th</sup>. He informed the council five gift cards will be awarded randomly for participation in the survey online as well as 5 gift cards awarded randomly for hand written surveys. Matt reported the results will be available in October. A discussion ensued. He mentioned the second item is the second annual confidential survey for early childhood facilities in

Pueblo related to who is in your center, what is your focus, training needed and expulsion policies. He stated there will be drawings for this survey. He stated the data will run in January. Matt reported the coalition will reach out to parents at both school districts to see what is going well and not going well after October first. A discussion ensued. Matt notified he will be stepping down this month as the PECC Chair due to other obligations. He and Angie encouraged anyone to nominate a new chair.

**B. ECE@PCC**

Molly Milusnic (Pueblo Community College)

Molly stated she is excited to be in her new position. She reported after speaking to Angie she recognizes the turnover concerns in Early Childhood. She mentioned she is a Pueblo native and feels she has connections locally that will support the ECE community. Molly stated classes started. She introduced Tracey Williams, the Chair for ECE/EDU, Social Sciences. Molly reported she will just focus on ECE. She stated the Southwest campus Chair, Dr. Mike Verderaime has a mentorship program that supports assistant teachers becoming teachers in Custer, Chaffee and Fremont Counties involving the workforce Center in Fremont County. Molly mentioned a grant they are working on to aid the Early Childhood Program at PCC called Career Forward that would help students pursuing an early childhood degree cover college tuition. She mentioned they are looking a covering ten students' tuition for an ECE AA degree. She stated 1011 and 1013 ECE classes are still free. She will be attending recruitment events and meet with providers to help support their educational needs. A discussion ensued.

[Molly.Milusnic@pueblocc.edu](mailto:Molly.Milusnic@pueblocc.edu) 719-549-3430

**C. UPK Updates**

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated there are 364 children not matched in the system yet and working on placing the children. She stated the DAA report is ran weekly for the matching system. Angie reported programs have started receiving their funding. She offered her assistance to providers with matching in the system and any questions you may have. A discussion ensued. She introduced Alexander Winter as the new Implementation Specialist for UPK at Children First.

**D. Provider Appreciation Event**

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie mentioned the Provider Appreciation Dinner is September 5<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the Fortino Ballroom on the PCC campus. She stated providers can contact Children First to register.

**E. Save the Date for 2024 Events**

Joe Bellavia (Children First)

Joe informed the council of the following events.

- a. Resource Sharing Day, February 16, 2024, Fortino Ballroom, 8am-5pm
- b. Cherish the Child, April, Pueblo Mall, TBD
- c. Tree of Life, April, Mineral Palace Park, TBD
- d. Steve Spangler-The Science Guy, April 6, 2024, TBD, 9am-4pm
- e. Fun Fair, April 20, 2024, PCC Welcome Center, 9am-1pm
- f. SBDC Conference, April 27, 2024, Fortino Ballroom, 9am-3pm
- g. Provider Appreciation Day, May 10, 2024, Fortino Ballroom, 6:30pm-8:00pm

**F. New Hires/Open positions**

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie informed the council Children First is hiring a Coach and a Family Specialist for UPK. She stated the job listing will be posted on the PCC website.

## **G. Membership**

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie encouraged new members to join the Pueblo Early Childhood Council.

## **V. Evaluation**

Eileen Dennis

Angie stated Eileen Dennis from Triple Aim will be sending an evaluation (1-5 rating with feedback) email after every council meeting. Eileen will compile and share those reports. The information is received in aggregate.

## **VI. Community Reports**

**Rita Zamora**-ECEMS-Rita want to recognize her staff. She reported they stepped up and helped a child having a seizure and supported parents following all licensing policies and procedures.

**Rhonda Duskey-Kochis**- SCCOHS-Rhonda stated the Pueblo West Center has an opening for an assistant teacher. She reported enrollment in Pueblo is almost full but there are openings in Pueblo West, Trinidad, and Walsenburg. She stated children do not need to be potty trained and need to be between ages 3 to 5 years. Rhonda reported Alamosa, Sanford, and have a new grantee.

**Molly Milusnic**-ECE@PCC- Molly mentioned Rosemary Breckenfelder is still available to support the ECE department.

**Katrina Appel**-Colorado Bluesky-Katrina explained children 0-3 years with delays can be referred to Early Intervention through the State website. She stated qualifications have changed, trying to capture more children with a delay of 33% in one area or a delay of 25% in two areas. Katrina stated therapists can go out to programs to support children.

**Angie Shehorn**-Children First-Angie introduced Joe Bellavia as the new Professional Development and Education Specialist at Children First.

**VII. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 12:008m.

**VIII. Next Meeting — September 25, 2023. HYBRID-Virtually via Zoom**

**In Person Meeting at TLC@ PCC, 1000 Minnequa Avenue, Pueblo, CO 81004  
IN Bank Conference Room on the First Floor**

### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/93498195039?pwd=eDJvamY0UkU3Wjdsb3Y5Zm8wMzFKQT09>

Meeting ID: 934 9819 5039 Passcode: 570894

### **Local Resources**

Children First Childcare Connections – [www.childrenfirstco.org](http://www.childrenfirstco.org)

Pueblo County Childhood Resources <https://county.pueblo.org/public-health/pueblo-county-childhood-resources>

### **Statewide Resources**

[www.coloradoshines.com](http://www.coloradoshines.com) (Colorado Shines)

<https://www.coloradoshinespdis.com/s/login/> (Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System –PDIS)

<https://earlylearningco.org/> (Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines)

Respectfully submitted,  
Paula Arellano