



Pueblo Early  
Childhood Council

# MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 27, 2025 HYBRID VIA ZOOM

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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:

Teresa Mathews-PECC/Children First  
Darla Hall-PECC/Children First  
Alexander Winter-PECC/Children First  
Matt Guy-Common Thread Group  
Lycynthia Ascensio-OJC/EHS  
Brenda Rodriguez-ESCCC  
Josette Rusk-SSCCC  
Gina Wilburn-CCCAP  
Angela Shehorn-PECC/Children First  
Matt Guy-Common Thread Group  
Rebecca Bellavia-PECC/Children First  
Joe Bellavia-PECC/Children First  
Berlinda Perdo-OJC  
Maria Chavez-Contreras-Catholic Charities  
Alyssa Hopkins-OJC  
Kristie Dowart-Health Solutions  
Emilee Lopez-CPLC  
Monica Torres-CPLC  
Manuel Calderon-D70/Migrant  
Angie Rogers-ELV

Gina Ferguson-Lopez-CFC  
Katrina Appel-Colorado Blue Sky  
Gina Wilburn-CCCAP  
Dwanette Martinez-D70/Migrant  
Christina Hopewell-CDPHE  
Donna Salvador-ESCCC  
Ryan Montoya-PECC/Children First  
Paula Arellano-PECC/Children First  
Frankie Boone-CCCAP  
Hunter Johnson-PECC/Children First  
Maricela Palma-ECEMS  
Vanessa Mateo-OJC  
Sarah Martinez-CDPHE  
Rita Samora-ECEMS  
Annette Alcon-CPLC  
Rhonda Duskey-Kochis-CPLC  
Darlene Bermudez-D60  
Julie Braun-CPLC  
Cynthia Pacheco-CPLC  
Vanessa Richardson-LCA

- I. Introduction: Meeting called to order by Angie at 11:03 am.**
- II. Additions to the Agenda:** Add Brenda Rodriguez and Donna Salvador to the attendees list.
- I. Approval of Minutes:** November 2024-pending approval once attendees names added.
- II. Migrant Education Program**  
**Manual Calderon**

Manual shared a comprehensive presentation about the Migrant education Program. Here is a quick summary of the key points:

- The program services migrant students who move to work in the agricultural industry and operates under federal law, originally established in 1966 as part of Title I.
- The program assists in various areas such as school enrollment, school readiness, tutoring, credit recovery, and providing essential resources like school supplies and uniforms.
- The program covers 53 school districts in Colorado, primarily in the Eastern Plains, with some presence in other areas including Colorado Springs.
- A major challenge is identifying eligible students, as recruiters must locate families working in agricultural jobs. This is done via a three-question survey in school enrollment packets.
- Eligibility for services is determined by:
  - Whether the family has moved within the last three years.
  - Whether the student has changed school districts.
  - Whether someone in the household has worked in agriculture.
- The program collaborates with multiple community partners to provide additional resources, including:
  - Early childhood education initiatives.
  - Parent empowerment workshops.
  - Annual Parent Advisory Council meetings.
  - The Migrant Youth Leadership Institute (next event on March 13 at CSU Pueblo).
  - Partnerships with local organizations for holiday toy distributions and essential needs assistance.

### **III. New Business:**

#### **A. SECC Update**

Matt Guy-Children First

[Matt@commonthread.org](mailto:Matt@commonthread.org)

Matt discussed the following:

#### **1. Upcoming Survey for Parents**

A new survey will be launched next week to gather information from parents about their experiences with early childhood opportunities in Pueblo County.

- The survey will be available from **Monday, February 3rd, to February 28th.**
- A QR code will be provided for easy access.

#### **○ Survey Distribution & Accessibility**

- The survey will be strategically placed in various locations to ensure valid and reliable responses.
- Efforts are being made to provide a **Spanish version** to reach a broader audience.
- **Incentives for Participation**
  - Gift cards will be offered as incentives to encourage participation.
- **Coalition Engagement**
  - Several agencies have been identified for follow-up regarding survey distribution.
- **National Conference Submission**
  - A presentation proposal will be submitted to the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** annual conference, highlighting the work of the Parent Council.
  - The submission deadline is at the end of the month.
- **Next Steps:**
  - Finalize and distribute the survey.
  - Ensure accessibility in both English and Spanish.
  - Monitor participation and data collection.
  - Complete and submit the NAEYC presentation proposal.

## **B. UPK Update**

Angie Shehorn-Children First  
Angie stated the following:

### **1. Continuity of Care Placement for Universal Preschool**

#### **Placement Timeline:**

- **Deadline for Priority Placement:** February 3rd
- **First Round of Matching:** February 10th
- **Second Round of Matching:** March 10th
- **Direct Placement:** Continues until the end of the school year
- **Eligibility for Priority Placement:**
  - Families must indicate one of the following on their application:
    - Currently attending a program
    - Sibling attending a program
    - Parent employed at the program
  - If families fail to answer these questions, there is a **small window to update their application** before February 3rd.

- **Action Item:**
  - If families expected to have priority placement are missing from rosters, reach out to **Alex or Ryan** for assistance in updating applications.
- **2. Organizational Changes in Universal Preschool Administration**
  - **Reorganization:**
    - The **Universal Preschool Program** has been moved under **Mary Alice Cohen** in the Office of Program Delivery.
    - Previously, it reported to **Dr. Lisa Roy**, but this change helps streamline leadership responsibilities.
    - **Mary Alice Cohen** is a strong advocate for families, councils, and communities.
  - **New Leadership:**
    - **Glenn Robinson** has been hired as Deputy Director and has recently started his role.
    - His presence is expected to **improve decision-making speed** within the program.
- **3. Governor's Proposed Budget for Universal Preschool**
  - **Funding Stability:**
    - The Governor's proposed budget aims to keep Universal Preschool funding at current levels.
    - However, details on how this funding will be distributed among programs remain unclear.
  - **State Payment Processing & Help Desk:**
    - **Metrics IQ** now manages both **payment processing** and serves as the **help desk** for family and program issues.
    - The State has agreed to allow communities to **handle local issues**, but:
      - There will be **no additional funding** for local assistance.
      - Some **permissions will be removed**, limiting local authority.
      - The **funding source for the help desk remains unknown**—it could reduce funding allocations for programs.
  - **Provider Reimbursement Increase:**
    - The budget includes an **increase in reimbursement rates for Universal Preschool providers**.
    - However, **there is no increase in funding for Local Coordinating Organizations (LCOs)**.

▪ **Next Steps & Open Questions:**

- Confirm priority placement updates before the February 3rd deadline.
- Monitor upcoming changes in funding allocations.
- Continue discussions with the State regarding the help desk and local problem-solving capabilities.

**B. Resource Sharing Day**

Angie Shehorn-Children First  
Angie reported the following:

- **Date:** February 28th
- **Registration:** A hyperlink is available for actual registration for Non-University Preschool Resource Sharing Day.
- **Flyer:**
  - The flyer has a new design this year to comply with accessibility requirements set by the Communications Department.
  - Due to these requirements, custom-designed flyers are no longer allowed.
  - The flyer is available for distribution. If you haven't received it, it can be sent via email to those who have signed the sign-in sheet.
- **Sharing & Promotion:**
  - Attendees are encouraged to share the flyer widely.
- **Registration & Fees:**
  - The registration fee is reduced to **\$10** to encourage participation.
  - Attendees **must bring their own lunch**.
  - Tables are available at **\$10** each.

**C. Committee Discussion**

Angie Shehorn-Children First  
Angie stated:

**1. Committee Discussion**

- Several months ago, it was proposed to reinstate the following committees:

- Health and Wellness Committee
- Social Emotional Committee
- Early Childhood Committee
- Family Committee
- The chairs of these committees were asked to confirm their roles; no responses have been received to date.
  - Discussion on the necessity of these committees moving forward: The Council and Parent Coalition already provide significant family connections.
  - The Council is exploring becoming a community screening agency for dental, vision, hearing, social-emotional, and child development screenings.
  - Existing social-emotional training programs, including an upcoming training on neurodiversity in March, address key concerns.
  - The early childhood sector is being actively addressed through other Council efforts.
- Consideration of whether subcommittees are still needed:
  - Historically, committees met monthly to support the work of the Council.
  - Other councils in the 11-county region have transitioned to ad hoc committees instead of standing subcommittees.
  - Consensus: There is currently no pressing need for these subcommittees, but they can be reinstated, if necessary, in the future.

#### **D. New standing agenda item**

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated the following:

- Starting next month, the Council will introduce a standing agenda item dedicated to hearing from early childhood providers.
- At the beginning of each month, an email will be sent out to providers in Pueblo to gather input on pressing topics, needs, and concerns.
- Providers include licensed childcare homes, preschool programs, and other early childhood professionals.
- This initiative aims to elevate and address current issues faced by providers.

- There is no preference for a specific provider group; all responses received will shape the discussion topics.

## E. [Legislation](#)

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie reported the following:

### 1. Legislation Tracker & Updates

- **Discussion:** The agenda included a link to a legislation tracker, which members can use to sign up for notifications on specific bills.
- **Bills Currently Being Monitored:**
  - **House Bill 251011 (Private Equity and Childcare Centers):**
    - Limits waitlist fees for families seeking childcare in centers owned by private equity firms.
    - Requires fees to be applied toward tuition and that all fees be clearly posted on websites.
    - Requires timely notification to families when eligibility or access changes.
    - Scheduled for a hearing at the Health and Human Services Committee on January 29.
  - **House Bill 251037 (Income Tax Credit for Eligible Teachers):**
    - This bill is currently being reviewed by the House Finance Committee.
    - Provides tax credits for early childhood professionals who submit credentials through the PDIS system.
  - **Senate Bill 25004 (Regulation of Childcare Center Fees):**
    - Limits waitlist fees to \$25 and requires childcare providers to post all fees on their websites.
    - Changes have been requested to remove "application" fees from the bill's language.
    - Scheduled for review by the Business, Labor, and Technology Committee on February 11.
  - **Senate Bill 25017 (Support for Early Childhood Health):**
    - Aims to standardize access to nurse health consultants and the Healthy Steps program, making the requirements and availability clearer.

### 2. Tax Credits for Early Childhood Professionals

- **Discussion:** A discussion on available tax credits for early childhood professionals, particularly for those with higher credentials.
- **Clarification:** Parents who do not typically file taxes due to income may still be eligible for tax credits by filing. This could potentially include childcare-related credits, in addition to other available credits for families with lower income.
- **Recommendation:** Encourage parents to use the United Way's "ITA" program for tax assistance if they are confused or unsure about the tax filing process.

### 3. Questions and Clarifications

- **Query on Waitlist Fees:**

- It was clarified that the bills on childcare fees are similar but distinct, with one focusing on private equity ownership and the other addressing general waitlist fees.
- Parents should be aware of the \$25 waitlist fee cap as it relates to both bills.
- The application and registration fees are not being regulated in the latest revision of Senate Bill 25004.

#### **4. Next Steps**

- Members are encouraged to sign up for the legislation tracker and stay informed about the bills.
- If interested in testifying on any of the bills, members can reach out for guidance on how to do so either in-person or virtually.
- Continued monitoring of the discussed bills and further follow-up on workforce initiatives.

#### **F. Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference**

##### **Angie Shehorn-Children First**

- Event Date: March 6th and 7th (Thursday and Friday)
- Location: Denver
- Details: This year's conference will be held on Thursday and Friday, as opposed to the usual Friday and Saturday schedule.
- Funding Assistance: If interested in attending but facing funding challenges, please reach out. There is limited funding available to help support a couple of individuals in attending the conference.

Action Required: Contact [insert contact name] if you are interested in attending and need funding assistance.

#### **G. Upcoming Trainings**

##### **Angie Shehorn-Children First**

##### **1. Upcoming Trainings and Events**

- Neurodiversity Training
  - Date: March 1st
  - Details: A flyer for this training will be released shortly. The delay in flyer distribution is due to the required approval process through the Communications Department.
  - Location: To be determined
  - Action: Keep an eye out for the flyer with more details.
- Classroom Management Training
  - Date: February 22nd from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM
  - Details: The flyer for this training will be released today.
  - Audience: Open to anyone, not just early childhood professionals.
  - Action: Sign up as soon as the flyer is available.
- March and April Trainings
  - Details: Additional training will be held in March and April. If there are specific topics of interest, attendees are encouraged to reach out with suggestions.
  - Audience: Training is open to all, including parents and foster parents.



- Action: Reach out with any training topics you'd like to see covered.

## 2. Registration Process Update

- Improved Registration Process
- Details: Partnering with Corporate College has simplified the registration process. Now, when paying with a credit card, participants no longer need to visit the cashier's office. Payment can be made directly during the registration process.
- Action: Use the new streamlined registration process for upcoming training.

## 3. Neurodiversity Training Location

- Reason for Hosting Location:
- The neurodiversity training will be held at a location where there is control over the room, making it easier to manage the session.
- Action: Attend the training at the designated location when the flyer is released.

## IV. Evaluation

Eileen Dennis

Angie stated Eileen Dennis 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.

## V. Community Reports –

**ECEMS-** Rita reported they received a Level 5 accreditation from Colorado Shines. She stated they will have a celebration February 20, 2025, from 6 to 7:30 pm. Angie will distribute the flyer on the list serve.

**CPLC-**Emilee stated Head Start will be offering a family resource training series every second and fourth Tuesday of the month in the evenings lasting forty-five minutes. She stated all are welcome to attend. She mentioned there will be one tomorrow about emergency preparedness and in February financial awareness and trauma informed training.

**VI. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm.

## VI. Next Meeting — February 24, 2025. HYBRID-Virtually via Zoom

**In Person Meeting at TLC @ PCC, 1000 Minnequa Avenue, Pueblo, CO 81004  
SMC Conference Room on the Third 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