



**Pueblo Early  
Childhood Council**

# MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 22, 2024 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:

Berlinda Perdo-OJC  
Teresa Mathews-PECC/Children First  
Brenda Rodriguez-ESCCC  
Rebecca Bellavia-PECC/Children First  
Dwanette Martinez-Migrant Education/D70  
Angie Shehorn-PECC/Children First  
Jerica Chacon-Health Solutions  
Ryan Montoya-PECC/Children First  
Eric Chervenak-Illuminate  
Frankie Boone-DHS/CCCAP  
Jennifer Walters-PECC/Children First  
Alexander Winters-PECC/Children First  
Arlene Kennedy-SSCC  
Joan Holtz-Illuminate

Gina Lopez-Ferguson-Caring for Colorado  
Rhonda Duskey-Kochis-CDI Head Start/SCCOHS  
Darla Hall-PECC/Children First  
Katrina Appel-Colorado BlueSky  
Angie Rogers-ELV  
Josette Rusk-SCC123  
Molly Milusnic-PCC ECE  
Donna Salvador-Independent Trainer  
JoAnn Garbiso-Illuminate  
Joe Bellavia-PECC/Children First  
Emilee Lopez-CDI Head Start/SCCOHS  
Joan Holtz-Illuminate  
Kay Dennis-D60  
Yvonne Trujillo-Illuminate

**I. Introduction: Meeting called to order by Angie at 11:00 am.**

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

**III. Approval of Minutes: November 2023-approved**

**IV. Agency Highlight-Illuminate Colorado**

Joan Holtz-Illuminate

Joan explained in 2017-2019 a group of stake holders came together to understand the barriers to childcare for moms seeking drug and alcohol treatment. She stated in the end a report came out with 14 different recommendations on how to support moms on their journey into treatment and recovery. Joan reported providing immediate childcare services to moms in treatment came to the top of the list. She explained the program they provide is to three centers in Denver, four to five treatment centers in the San Luis Valley, and several in SE Colorado(Pueblo/ Canon City) with two new teachers. Joan stated there are three RV's in service named Honey, Acorn, Caramel renovated into childcare programs providing childcare onsite. She explained the programs they are working with in SE Colorado in collaboration with Children First. Joan shared pictures of the interior of the RV's. She informed the Council the services provided cover three hours of care. A discussion ensued. She mentioned they have taken on Safe Baby Court which opens up to other programs in Pueblo. Joan invited all to tour the new RV-Luna after the meeting.

## **V. New Business:**

### **A. Support the Early Childhood Community (SECC)- survey results**

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated Matt is unavailable to report out. She stated he was going to present information comparing the suspension and expulsion data from last year's survey but did not have enough submissions to compare.

### **B. UPK Updates**

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated the year two applications for providers will launch this week. She mentioned UPK providers will be able to move children continuing in their programs right into the next year. Angie stated there will be positive changes next year and one of them is the new name-Colorado Universal Preschool. She informed the Council the Governor has asked the state not to use the acronym CUP. A discussion ensued.

### **C. New Staff**

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated Children First has new staff members. She introduced Ryan Montoya. She informed the Council Ryan will be working with families in the UPK programs and with wrap around care. She mentioned his counterpart will be Alexander Winter whose focus is the UPK programs. She mentioned as the quality standards roll out Alex will help the programs with questions. Angie mentioned in February a new staff member will be introduced.

### **D. Quality Improvement funding update**

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated the funding for quality improvement has been depleted. She stated it has never been depleted this early in the year. Angie stated if programs need coaching other funding has been identified to help. She mentioned the same issue could happen next year so she encouraged programs to apply by July 1. Angie stated in Legislation there were 147 bills introduced in the first week alone. She stated we will keep a watchful eye on the CCAP omnibus bill supporting employees with children that qualify for CCCAP. She will share the details of the bill once it is introduced and assigned a number. Angie mentioned EPIC Colorado introduced legislation supporting child friendly communities removing barriers such as zoning and licensing supports in regards to empty buildings being utilized as childcare centers. She reported she questioned the data on workforce because without the workforce there will not be an open program. Angie stated she will share the tracker for reference.

### **E. Strategic Plan discussion**

Angie Shehorn- Children First

Angie reviewed the high-level Strategic Plan. She mentioned the Strategic Plan is aligned to the Colorado Early Childhood framework which guides the work.

- Strategic Priority: System Building
- Strategic Priority: Advocacy & Policy
- Strategic Priority: Resource Development
- Strategic Priority: Program Supports

Angie stated she will share the information after the meeting and asked for feedback. She continued to share the drilled down version. She stated there are three objectives and action items.

- Goal 1: Learning and Development
  - Objective 1: Actively recruit new providers to expand overall capacity

- Objective 2: Support Programs in their Pursuit of High Quality
- Objective 3: Strengthen Workforce and Program Support
- Goal 2: Family & Community Support
  - Objective 1: Services & Support
  - Objective 2: Enhance Community Engagement
  - Objective 3: Implement Effective Data Collection and Reporting
- Goal 3: Health and Wellbeing Supports to Families and EC Professionals
  - Objective 1: Provide Outreach to Families
  - Objective 2: Support Those Who Support

## VI. 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.

## VII. Community Reports

**Children First-Angie Shehorn**--Children First- Joe stated Resource Sharing Day is February 16, 2024 and one can register by calling him and he will guide you through the process. He stated the fee is \$35 per person and an additional \$35 if with a table totaling \$70 for both.

**CDI-SCCOHS-Rhonda Duskey-Kochis**- Rhonda shared the official announcement of a permanent grantee. She stated the new grantee is Chicanos Por La Causa housed out of Arizona but operating in Texas and New Mexico. She explained their focus is on early childhood as well as housing, behavioral health and much more. Rhonda stated Pueblo is their first location in Colorado and they will be processing interviewing and onboarding of staff and will take over on February 17, 2024.

**ESCCC-Brenda Rodriguez**- Brenda reminded everyone she has taken over as Director of East Child Care Center.

**Colorado BlueSky-Katrina Appel**- Katrina stated Colorado BlueSky will no longer provide case management services under Medicaid waivers but Early Intervention will still take place. She stated all referrals for children with concerns can still be sent to them for referrals and then will be processed through the state. She stated if there are questions to reach out to her.

[kapple@coloradoblueskyenterprises.org](mailto:kapple@coloradoblueskyenterprises.org)

**VII. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 12:39 pm.

**VIII. Next Meeting — February 26, 2024. 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

*Pueblo Early Childhood Council minutes 1-22-24*