



**Pueblo Early  
Childhood Council**

# MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 23, 2023 HYBRID VIA WEBEX

---

## 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  
Christina Hopewell-CDPHE  
Vanessa Mateo-OJC  
Dwanette Martinez-Migrant Education/D70  
Frankie Boone-DHS-CCCAP  
Veronica Montoya-Packard Board  
Angela Vigil-Mariposa  
Kathryn Dennis-D60  
Ida Rhodes-Catholic Charities  
Jennifer Walters-Children First

Gina Lopez-Ferguson-Caring for Colorado  
Caryn Apodaca-Caring for Colorado  
Alyssa Hopkins-OJC  
Valerie Maldonado-ELV  
Angie Rogers-ELV  
Kristie Dorwart-Health Solutions  
Kevin Barkocy-Academy Kids  
Molly Milusnic-ECE@PCC  
Alexander Winters-PECC/Children First  
Paula Arellano-Children First  
Alyssa Desro-D60

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

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

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

**III. Agency Highlight-Caring for Colorado/Packard**

Gina Lopez-Ferguson-Caring for Colorado

Gina introduced herself as Director of Play Based Philanthropy for the Caring for Colorado Foundation housed in Denver and Caryn Apodaca is their Philanthropy Coordinator. She stated they are Pueblo natives and work on local grant making efforts. Gina mentioned their advisory board is in the process of strategic planning for the Packard Fund for Pueblo and want to engage the councils voice regarding early childhood to target strategies and focus areas. Gina proceeded to give a brief history about David Packard and the Packard Foundation. She mentioned in 2018 the Packard Foundation wanted to ensure Packard's legacy in Pueblo and therefore awarded an endowment of \$20 million dollars stipulating organizations in only Pueblo County could apply and grant making decisions will be made locally by a community advisory board. She mentioned there is one open board position open for the spring. Gina stated there are two grant cycles. She explained the are children, youth, and families and community impact circle grants. A discussion ensued.

#### **IV. New Business:**

##### **A. UPK Updates**

Paula Arellano-Children First

Paula stated the following updates.

- 390 applications (children are not yet matched) – Angie is working through these applications to determine why they are not matched and to get the child matched with a program

Reasons:

- family moved away from community
- family decided to not send child
- duplicate application
- only one program selected and no available seats
- Currently 366 open seats available in Pueblo throughout county
- 331 children enrolled 10hrs week (\$504.21 per child)
- 607 children enrolled 15hrs week (\$630.06 per child)
- 25 children enrolled 30hrs week (\$1087.36 per child)
- In October alone UPK has brought into the community just over \$575,000
- 103 children eligible for 30hrs week but not currently enrolled in a 30hr week program (Angie is contacting both families and programs to determine next steps -A. does the program have the ability to offer 30hrs week (if yes, move child to 30hr position, if no, B. does family want to move to another provider who offers 30hr program or stay where they are and forfeit 30hr eligibility) \*30hr eligibility criteria: MUST HAVE income below 270% federal poverty level AND 1 other criterion:
  - Individualized Education Program (IEP)
  - Homelessness
  - Dual language learner
  - Foster/Kinship care

Families can still apply for UPK for this school year

Applications for next school year are not available until Spring 2024.

Questions: Contact Angie

##### **B. Strategic Plan-Draft**

Paula Arellano-Children First

Paula stated the Strategic Plan Draft will be sent out for review and feedback mid-November. She stated Angie will take feedback until early December. Final version will be sent out late December/early January for implementation January 2024.

##### **C. Healthy Halloween**

Paula Arellano-Children First

Paula stated Healthy Halloween will be on October 31<sup>st</sup> at Praise Assembly on Troy in Pueblo from 9 am to 12 pm, ages 0-5 years old.

**D. Dr. Erjavec announced retirement**

Paula Arellano-Children First

Paula informed the council Dr. Erjavec announced her retirement May 31, 2024 and there will be a nationwide search launched for the next PCC President.

**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**

**Molly Milusnic-** Pueblo Community College ECE-Molly announced Horror on the Hoag at PCC from 4-7pm, Friday October 27, and Saturday October 28, Bright Night at the Riverwalk 4-8pm, and Monday October 30, first day for Spring registration.

**Paula Arellano-**Children First-Paula asked the council to watch for job postings on the PC website for Children First – Family Specialist and Early Childhood Coach. Please contact Angie if you have any questions. She mentioned the council is seeking a Chair to preside over PECC meetings. Please send nominations to Angie.

**VII. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 12:41 am.

**VIII. Next Meeting — November 27, 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