



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.

Meeting Minutes

Date:	February 23,2026
Time:	11:00 AM -12:30 PM
Location:	Hybrid via Zoom (SMC Conference Room on the Third Floor)
Recorded By:	Ryan Montoya

Attendees:	
Alcon, Annette: CPLC (<i>Virtual</i>)	Johnson, Hunter: Children First/PECC
Appel, Katrina: CO Blue Sky	Lopez, Emilee: CPLC
Arellano, Paula: Children First/PECC	Montoya, Ryan: Children First/PECC
Bellavia, Rebecca: Children First/PECC	Pedro, Berlinda: OJC
Bellavia, Joe: Children First/PECC	Rodriguez, Brenda: ESCCC (<i>Virtual</i>)
Gallegos-Casanova, Gerald: Health Solutions (<i>Virtual</i>)	Rogers, Angie: ELV (<i>Virtual</i>)
Guy, Matt: SECC	Rusk, Josette: SSCCS (<i>Virtual</i>)
Hall, Darla: Children First/PECC	Samora, Rita: DHS (<i>Virtual</i>)
Jaramillo, JoAnn	Shehorn, Angie: Children First/PECC

Agenda

Introductions:	Meeting called to order by Angie at 11:00 am.
Additions to Agenda:	None
Approval of Minutes:	January-Approved

New Business

SECC

Matt Guy

- Currently reviewing two sets of data:
 - Data from a PWAT study on how businesses are responding to labor shortages.
- Plans to begin discussion on conducting another parent survey this spring.
 - **Efforts are underway to contact school districts.**

UPK

Angie Shehorn-Children First/PECC

Enrollment Status

- 581 children have been assigned seats for the next school year following the continuity of care round.
- This represents about one-third of the current year's total; numbers are expected to increase significantly after matching rounds.

Matching Timeline

- First round: Families receive matches on February 25.
- Second round: Occurs in March.
- Direct enrollment begins April 1.

Program Updates

- Changes to program offerings in District 60; families can contact the district or staff (Ryan/Angie) for assistance.
- Increase in providers offering full-day options, improving availability for families.

Full-Day (Supplemental Hours) Eligibility

- Criteria remains largely unchanged:
- Must meet income requirement and one additional qualifier.
- Income thresholds:
 - 100% of federal poverty level (automatically qualifies).
 - 265% of federal poverty level (updated from 270%).
- Additional qualifiers include:
 - IEP
 - Foster care
 - English as a second language
 - Homelessness

Notifications & Support

- Families have been notified of full-day eligibility first; programs notified afterward.

	• Staff can assist families and providers with accessing eligibility and placement information. <i>Funding Update</i> • Additional funding has been requested at the state level to expand full-day preschool access. • If approved, more qualifying families may receive full-day placements. <i>Providers</i> • New providers are onboarding for the upcoming school year, increasing family options. <i>Q&A</i> • Question: When can providers enroll matched families? • Answer: After February 25, once families accept their match in the system. <i>Additional Information</i> • The state is developing a reference document outlining universal preschool quality standards; it will be shared once available.
--	--

CCDF-Freeze	<u>Angie Shehorn-Children First/PECC</u> <i>Court Ruling</i> • On February 6, a federal court granted a preliminary injunction in favor of the department. • The injunction remains in effect until a final decision on the case is made. <i>Impact of Injunction</i> • The federal government is prohibited from implementing the proposed ACF funding restrictions. • Any previously imposed restrictions beyond statutory authority must be removed. • The government cannot reimpose those restrictions while the injunction is active. <i>Operational Status</i> • Colorado can continue operating under the existing CCDF framework during litigation. • CCDF-funded services and reimbursements will continue as usual.
--------------------	---

	<i>Extended Deadline</i> • The deadline for funded services and reimbursements has been extended through May 31, 2026. <i>Future Outlook</i> • The timeline may change depending on court proceedings. • The preliminary injunction could be extended if a final decision is not reached by May 31. • Updates will be communicated if there are any changes. <i>Summary</i> • Programs and families (including those using CCAP) can continue normal operations through May 31, 2026.
--	---

Pinwheels of Possibility	<u>Angie Shehorn-Children First/PECC</u> • A “Pinwheels for Possibilities” resource link is available on the agenda. • Illuminate Colorado is no longer selling or distributing pinwheels. • The website now provides alternative purchasing options, including retailers such as Amazon. <i>Change is due to:</i> • Increased costs • Concerns about environmental impact (waste from disposable pinwheels) • Organizations planning pinwheel displays (e.g., for April awareness activities) should use the provided links or purchase from other vendors.
--	--

Legislative	<u>Angie Shehorn: Children First/PECC</u> Senate Bill 2620 • Assigned to the Senate Education Committee; hearing scheduled for February 25. • Anticipated amendments include creation of a task force to: ◦ Review current licensing models ◦ Recommend improvements • Plans remain to bring licensing contracts in-house under CDEC employees. • Exception: IRE will continue serving Pueblo, El Paso, and Arapahoe counties. • Opportunities available for public testimony (virtual or in-person). • Additional updates expected after the committee hearing. Senate Bill 2619 • Amendment added; bill has passed Senate Education Committee and Senate floor. • Scheduled for House Education Committee hearing on March 11. • Updated fiscal note is budget neutral, allowing the bill to proceed without appropriations review. • Includes a potential 3-year transition period for standalone LCO communities. Key Provisions of SB 2619 • Reduces administrative burden by: ◦ Consolidating into one contract, one budget, and one scope of work with the department ◦ Requiring a single unified plan (replacing multiple existing plans) • Provides clearer guidance on community strategic planning. • Directs rulemaking for: ◦ Community waiver processes ◦ Transition timelines ◦ Accountability measures • Improves alignment, accountability, and partnership between local and state systems. • Updates Early Childhood Council statute to support long-term system effectiveness. Additional Notes • More legislation is expected; updates will be shared as new bills are introduced. • A resource link can be provided to track all current legislation.
---------------------------	--

Community Reports	<u>Angie Shehorn-Children First/PECC</u> <i>Community Reports</i> <i>Head Start Update</i> • Applications are now open for the 2026–2027 school year. • Program is not yet participating in UPK; families can apply directly. • A Heart Walk in partnership with the American Heart Association is planned for March 20. • Potential location is being coordinated with PCC; details will be shared once finalized. <i>Early Intervention Update</i> • New statewide eligibility requirement begins July 1: ◦ Children must be re-determined eligible annually. ◦ Currently, eligible children remain in the program until no concerns are present. • Change is driven by cost containment measures. <i>Anticipated Impacts</i> • Likely reduction in caseloads. • Increased movement of children on and off eligibility until age 3. • Expected increase in referrals and evaluations. • Additional administrative and time burden for families (estimated ~2-hour additional meeting annually). <i>Implementation Notes</i> • Redetermination will occur at annual plan meetings starting July 1. • Workgroups will begin soon to determine full implementation details. • If annual requirements are not completed, families may be dropped from the program. <i>Questions & Discussion</i> • Concern raised about timelines and flexibility for families completing redetermination requirements. • Clarified that the new eligibility evaluation will be incorporated into the existing annual planning process. <i>Training Opportunities</i> • Free training available on Narcan and vaping prevention, led by the Health Department. • Upcoming STEM training focused on teaching young children: ◦ Offered through the Corporate College
-------------------	---

	○ Cost: \$20 per person ○ Includes 2 contact hours • Training flyers will be shared with participants. <i>Upcoming Events</i> • Early Childhood Summit ○ Date: May 1 ○ Location: Colorado State University Pueblo ○ Registration is open; information will be re-shared. • Resource Sharing Day ○ Scheduled for Friday ○ Registration is closed ○ Attendees may bring their own lunch
--	--

Provider Spotlight	<u>Rebecca Bellavia: Children First/PECC</u> A new Provider Spotlight initiative has been launched to recognize licensed child care providers in the community. • Goals: ○ Highlight providers and their unique offerings ○ Provide marketing support (e.g., flyers, social media features) • Selection targets: ○ Two home providers per month ○ One center provider per month (none selected this month due to no survey submissions) • Participation requires completion of a brief survey to gather and approve shared information. Featured Providers (This Month) • Sarah Valdez (Home Provider – Pueblo) ○ Newly licensed in January ○ Focuses on creating a safe, welcoming, family-like environment ○ Emphasizes nature-based learning with outdoor, unstructured play • Christina Richard (Home Provider – Pueblo West) ○ Licensed in July; experienced provider since 2003 ○ Former provider and preschool teacher in California ○ Operates a home-based program focused on a welcoming, family environment ○ Actively advancing in Colorado Shines (Level 2, working toward higher levels) ○ Participates in the food program and accepts CCAP Additional Notes • Provider flyers are displayed onsite (near elevators) and promoted via social media.
---------------------------	---

	• Increased encouragement for providers to share personalized highlights rather than only basic program details. Closing • Congratulations extended to featured providers. • Continued encouragement for providers to complete the survey to be considered.
--	---

Adjourn
Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM

Next Meeting
March 23, 2026 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://cccs-edu.zoom.us/j/83649820790?pwd=UXeIPStoXkRk2FQBy3m7aPVM4555u.1 Meeting ID: 836 4982 0790 Passcode: 767195
<u>Local Resources</u> Children First Childcare Connections – www.childrenfirstco.org Pueblo County Childhood Resources https://county.pueblo.org/public-health/pueblo-county-childhood-resources
<u>Statewide Resources</u> 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,

Ryan Montoya