



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:	March 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>	Kennedy, Arlene: SCC1 <i>(Virtual)</i>
Bellavia, Rebecca: Children First/PECC	Martinez, Raelynn: CPLC <i>(Virtual)</i>
Bellavia, Joe: Children First/PECC	Mohar, Randi: PDPHE <i>(Virtual)</i>
Chavez Conteras, Maria: Catholic Charities	Montoya, Ryan: Children First/PECC
Duskey, Rhonda: CPLC <i>(Virtual)</i>	Palma, Mari: <i>ECEMES (Virtual)</i>
Gage, Justine: PDPHE <i>(Virtual)</i>	Rodriguez, Brenda: ESCCC
Gallegos-Casanova, Gerald: Health Solutions <i>(Virtual)</i>	Rogers, Angie: ELV
Guy, Matt: SECC	Samora, Rita: DHS <i>(Virtual)</i>
Hall, Darla: Children First/PECC <i>(Virtual)</i>	Sanata, Lynanne: First Preschool <i>(Virtual)</i>
Jaramillo, JoAnn: Trinity <i>(Virtual)</i>	Shehorn, Angie: Children First/PECC
Johnson, Hunter: Children First/PECC	Torres, Monica: CPLC <i>(Virtual)</i>

Agenda

Introductions:	Meeting called to order by Angie at 11:00 am.
Additions to Agenda:	None
Approval of Minutes:	February: On Hold Until April

New Business

SECC

Matt Guy

Parent Survey

- Decision made not to conduct a parent survey this spring due to tight timeline.

Business Community Discussion

- Productive conversation about current conditions and engagement within the business community.

Public Health Data Review

- Reviewed findings from Colorado Public Health Department's Quality Child Care Workgroup. Results aligned with parent coalition observations, validating current efforts while highlighting ongoing needs.

Leadership/Transition Topics:

- No group discussion regarding concerns about Rhonda's upcoming retirement (District 70).
- Some individual (not group) conversations have occurred about leadership changes and challenges in both District 60 and District 70.

District Updates:

- Awareness of programming changes in District 60.
- Broader considerations in District 70 beyond retirement noted but not discussed in depth.

UPK

Angie Shehorn-Children First/PECC

Matching Round 2:

- Currently in progress.
- Providers have received matched student lists.
- Families notified tomorrow to accept matches.
- Families needing help should contact local team if unable to accept placement.

Placement Numbers:

- 172 children matched across six-county region (pending acceptance).
- Total projected placements will exceed 900 children for upcoming school year.

Direct Enrollment:

- Begins April 1.
- Expected to be busy through end of school year, then slow over summer (anticipated).

Funding & Reimbursement:

- No confirmed increase in provider reimbursement for 2026–27.
- Increase considered unlikely due to state budget but not finalized.

Major Structural Changes (Starting July 1):

- State assuming greater control over enrollment, recruitment, and provider support.
- Local Coordinating Organization (LCO) role reduced:
- Will serve Pueblo County only.
- Other five counties may contract for continued support services (pending details).

Shift in Responsibilities:

- State-managed: Matching, application assistance, enrollment, provider recruitment/retention, family outreach.
- Local team limited to specific ticket categories:
- Families: "Other" and "Finding a School"
- Providers: "Other" and "General Information"
- Represents ~27% of total support tickets; majority shifting to state.

System Access Concerns:

- Local team may lose permissions to assist with certain tasks.
- Commitment to help families/providers as long as access allows.

Provider Actions:

- Changes (e.g., adding classrooms/seats) recommended before July 1 for local support.
- Future process expected to be self-service, but unclear until rollout.

Operational Concerns:

- Potential slower response times with centralized state system.
- Concerns about reduced local support capacity.

State Initiatives:

- Dedicated state team for quality improvement and kindergarten readiness.

Contract & Timeline Issues:

- Scope of work delayed until mid-April (normally earlier).
- Likely need for contract extension, as standard approval timeline exceeds July 1 deadline.

General Sentiment:

- Stakeholders expressed concern and frustration about reduced local control and increased state responsibility.

Provider Spotlight	<u>Rebecca Bellavia-Children First/PECC</u> Purpose: • Launched January 2026 to highlight early childhood providers in the community. • Goal: showcase 2 providers per month via flyers, social media, and office displays (with provider consent). March Spotlights: 1. Yvette Davis (Home Provider) ○ Former District 70 teacher and reading specialist. ○ Teacher of the Year 2021; Best of Business 2025 for her home childcare. ○ Opened family child care home post-retirement and is a UPK provider. ○ Emphasis on social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth, early literacy, language, and play-based learning. ○ Flyer displayed in office and social media. 2. Eastside Child Care Center – Director: Brenda Rodriguez ○ Recognized as an Early Childhood Champion by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. ○ Certificate and recognition shared via state platforms (website, social media, newsletter). ○ Acknowledged for dedication, passion, and advocacy for children and families. Next Steps / Participation: • Providers encouraged to submit questionnaires to be featured in future spotlights. • Recognition includes a personalized flyer and online promotion. Community Engagement: • Spotlights reinforce appreciation for providers’ contributions and celebrate achievements. Acknowledgments: • Congratulations extended to Yvette Davis and Brenda Rodriguez for March 2026.
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Cherish the Child	<u>Angie Shehorn-Children First/PECC</u> Date & Time: April 2nd, 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM Location: Pueblo Mont, near JCPenney’s entrance (by Easter Bunny display) Details: • Hundreds of children expected • Music and multiple vendor tables • Flyers will be distributed this week; families encouraged to attend Organization in Charge: CASA • CASA manages invitations and participation • Interested participants can join the waitlist if spots become available • Contact: Zane Grant at CASA (email available upon request)
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Tree of Life	<u>Angie Shehorn: Children First/PECC</u> Date & Time: April 21st, 10:00 – 11:30 AM Location: Mineral Palace Park, near the greenhouse Details: • Proclamation reading • Children’s songs and eco-friendly bird feeder activity • Snacks provided • Focus on celebrating young children and their role in the community
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Fun Fair	<u>Angie Shehorn-Children First/PECC</u> Date & Time: April 11th, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Location: Pueblo Community College, Ormond Campus, Student Center (corner of Ormond & Harrison, 900 West Ormond) Details: • Activities include police cars, fire trucks, magician, bounce house, dancing, and vendor tables • Free to attend for families and children Vendor Participation: Contact Joe Bellavia to reserve a table or get more information
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Early Childhood Summit	<u>Angie Shehorn-Children First/PECC</u> Date & Location: May 1st at CSU Pueblo Registration: \$25 per attendee; link provided in the meeting agenda Details: • Features multiple speakers and educational sessions • Provides valuable information for early childhood professionals Special Note: • Those attending the Consultative Roles Training at the same time should register through Stephanie, not via the Summit link
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Legislation	<u>Angie Shehorn: Children First/PECC</u> 1. Senate Bill 26020 – Early Childhood Licensing Cleanup ○ Status: In appropriations; likely to remain until after the long bill is introduced. ○ Purpose: Streamline and coordinate regulatory/licensing agencies for early childhood. ○ Potential Amendment: Creation of a task force to review licensing models nationwide. ○ Next Steps: Updates to be shared as bill progresses. 2. Senate Bill 26019 – Consolidation of Early Childhood Councils and LCOs ○ Status: Postponed until after the long bill introduction; was scheduled for House Education Committee. ○ Advocacy: Coalition member will testify in support (also testified in Senate). ○ Amendment: Allows 3-year transition for communities with separate councils and LCOs. ○ Goal: Passage hoped for by end of April. 3. Senate Bill 26135 – K–12 Funding / Positive Factor ○ Purpose: Increase funding for school districts via a “positive factor” (~2% of statewide total program funding). ○ Potential Impact: Could also positively affect preschool funding. ○ Status: School districts still deciding support; monitored by ECLA. 4. House Bill 261193 – Vision Testing ○ Requirement: Vision testing for pre-K, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th grades. ○ Families must be informed of results. 5. House Bill 261260 – Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Updates ○ Clarifies that ≤5% of county CCAP funds can be used for administrative costs. ○ Delays certain cost-increasing implementations from 2026 to 2028. ○ Goal: Reduce waitlists and increase service availability for families. 6. House Bill 261282 – Eliminate Duplicative Regulation for School District Childcare Centers ○ Purpose: Uncouple school district preschool and school-age programs from licensing. ○ Concerns: Removing licensing could disqualify programs from CCAP and Universal Preschool funding. ○ Origin: Adams School District, Denver metro area. ○ Status: Mixed support; ongoing statewide discussion. • Resources: ○ Bill tracker available from Around Children’s Campaign provides: sponsors, fiscal notes, committees, amendments, and support/monitoring status.
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Community Reports	<u>Angie Shehorn: Children First/PECC</u> East Side Child Care Center • Shade Structure Installation ○ A 12x12 shade structure grant was received and installed over the past weekend. ○ Children are expected to enjoy the new outdoor space. Professional Development Opportunities • Upcoming trainings: ○ Narcan training – \$3 ○ Substance abuse response for providers – \$3 ○ STEM classes – \$20, includes prizes and a flash drive with implementable programs ○ Neurodiversity training – details to come • Next STEM session: April 21st • Flyers and schedules will be emailed to participants. CPLC Preschool Enrollment • Applications open for full-day preschool (Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM) for next school year. • Families may call 719-420-0125 for information and enrollment. Health Department Update • Justin Gage is now the program manager overseeing maternal and child health work. • Focus areas include developmental screening and continued support for early childhood programs. • He succeeds Christina Hopewell, who previously held this role.
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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