



MEETING MINUTES MARCH 25, 2024 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:

Teresa Mathews-PECC/Children First
Brenda Rodriguez-ESCCC
Alyssa Hopkins-OJC
Alexander Winters-PECC/Children First
Natalie Sparks-Kinderkirk
Emilee Lopez-CPLC
Ryan Montoya-PECC/Children First
Paula Arellano-PECC/Children First
Frankie Boone-DHS/CCCAP
Gina Lopez-Ferguson-Caring for Colorado

Amanda Kolman-Hope House
Darla Hall-PECC/Children First
Katrina Appel-Colorado BlueSky
Angie Shehorn-PECC/Children First
Jennifer Walters-PECC/Children First
Molly Milusnic-PCC ECE
Matt Guy-Common Thread
Hunter Johnson-PECC/Children First
Christina Hopewell-PDPHE

I. Introduction: Meeting called to order by Angie at 11:03 am.

II. Additions to the Agenda: N/A

III. Approval of Minutes: February 2024-approved.

**IV. Agency Highlight-
Amanda Kolman-Hope House**

Amanda proceeded to explain she has worked with teen moms for over thirteen years with an organization called Young Lives. She assisted by walking alongside and listening to their stories. She states she witnessed teen moms struggling with basic needs and longed to provide them some extra resources. Amanda started a conversation with Hope House Colorado and was able to open a home for teen moms in Canon City. She stated they have two teen moms and four children in the home at this time. She addressed the overarching problem.

- Over 2,000 babies born to teen moms in Colorado
- 67% of parenting teen moms live below the federal poverty line
- Teen mom-one child live sustainably in Fremont County-work 82 hours a week for basic needs
- Less than 2% of teen moms ever graduate from college, fewer than half earn high school diploma

Amanda proceeded to address the solution.

- A Place to Belong-Hope House designs community activities-teen moms build friendships
- Education-Encourages teen moms to finish high school or further education
- FREE-Residential Program and self-sufficiency support

She explained how the program works.

1. Application
2. Eligibility Requirements
 - Parenting mon between the ages of 15-20
 - Full or partial custody
 - Legal Status
3. Motivated

Amanda reviewed the self-sufficiency rubric that measures two scales-economic and personal-that moms will need to leave the home to provide for their family economically and thrive personally. She reviewed why it works.

- Relationships-at least one stable relationship with an adult
- PAIRIN Resources-Helps identify mom's soft skills
- Time-Conflict management

Amanda detailed current teen moms are working towards high diploma, enrolling children in childcare to enable them to return to the workforce, and attending parenting classes. She stated they also offer respite care for a week to support young mothers.

Amanda Kolman 2880 Central Ave. Canon City Co 81212 719-371-6041 [Hope House](#)

V. New Business:

A. Pre-Licensing training in Spanish

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated she received a request from an agency that is willing to offer a free licensing training in Spanish. She stated the program would like to meet the interested party so determine if in person or virtual classes would be best. Angie asked that those interested reach out to her by the end of the week.

B. UPK Updates

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie shared the UPK celebrations.

- 2025 providers have registered to be Universal Preschool providers for 2024-25-up from 1,820 who participated last year.
- Nearly 27,000 four-year-old's received 15 hours of funding per week.
- 52.1% of children were low-income.
- 56% of children were children of color.
- Nearly 50% of our Universal Preschool providers were rated Level 3-5 by Colorado Shines

Angie proceeded to explain the system opened for new providers and returning providers to set up their program profile for the 24-25 year. She stated they have, through February to get that done, and applications launch for family families on February 29, which is the pre-registration timeframe until Thursday, which is March 28. She explained families with applications will receive emails to accept the match. Angie stated there will be another application cycle in July right before school starts. She mentioned three-year old's are not in the system and those with IEP's will not be in this system and will go straight to the district. She stated four-year old's with IEP's will fill out the application but will work with Child Find for placement. Angie informed the council Paragon will no longer serve preschool.

C. CLASS Report

Jennifer Walters-Children First

Jenny stated she has been working on CLASS observations for the last year. She explained Class actually stands for a classroom assessment scoring system. She stated it is an observation instrument, and it is developed to assess effective teacher, child interactions and infant toddler, preschool and elementary classrooms and settings. Jenny stated the tool does not evaluate the physical environment at all and it doesn't evaluate the materials, issues related to health and safety or the use of a specific curriculum. She explained each age group is scored across various different, like dimensions and domains, and the scoring system is based on a 7-point rating scale which helps to identify. If the classrooms fall into like a low medium or high range.

Gathered Data:

- 32 CLASS Observations
 - 9 Childcare Centers
 - 2 Family Childcare Homes
 - 4 infant observations
 - 13 toddler observations
 - 15 preschool observations

Jenny proceeded to explain in the infant environments she observed relational climate, teacher sensitivity, facilitated exploration, early language, and support. She stated half of the environment scored mid to high range across all dimensions. Jenny stated the biggest areas of growth in those infant environments are going to be the facilitated exploration in the early language support. She explained in order to help teachers encourage their skills or to help them support facilitated exploration they really just need to spend most of their time actively involved with infants, either joining in, initiating and mirroring their interactions during play and within their routines. Jenny explained in detail how the teachers can support the infants. She stated the toddler observation engage support for learning is facilitation of learning and development, quality of feedback and language modeling. She stated these observations scored mid to high range for emotional and behavioral support and mid to low for engaging support and learning. Jenny explained teachers can improve in this dimension by providing intentional opportunities for guidance and for learning and development. Jenny stated with the preschool environment she observed emotional support, classroom organization and instructional support. She stated emotional support has positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity in regard for students and perspective in classroom behavior. She explained classroom organization as behavior management, productivity and instructional learning formats and supports. She stated in emotional support scores were mid to high range and mid to low in instructional support. Jenny detailed how teachers can grow. A discussion ensued.

D. Fun Fair

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated the Fun Fair will be April 20, 2024 from 9 am-12 pm at Pueblo Community College Campus-Student Center at the corner of Orman and Harrison. She asked if any agency was interested in a table they can contact Children First. Angie stated it is free to the families, and to vendors.

E. Tree of Life

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated the Tree of Life Ceremony will be April 8 at Mineral Palace Park by the green house. She asked for a child count so there will be enough snacks. She also mentioned there will be a local author read aloud a book about Pueblo Chilies. Brenda asked for a moment of silence and the children sing a song at the event in remembrance of Maria Subia.

F. Cherish the Child

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated the Cherish the Child Event will be at the Pueblo Mall (outside of JCPenney’s) April 4, 2024 from 4:30 – 6:30 pm. She stated it is a great event for families to receive resources and children to participate in activities.

G. Southern Colorado EC Business Conference

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated the 3rd Annual Southern Colorado Business Conference will be on April 27, 2024 from 9am to 3 pm at the PCC Fortino Ballroom and participants can earn PDIS credit. She stated breakfast and lunch will be served. Angie mentioned the EC Summit April 5, 2024 at CSU Pueblo has a wait list but let her know if you are interested in being added to the waitlist. Angie stated Steve Spangler registration closes today and if anyone is still interested they have until the end of the day.

H. Legislative Tracker

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated this tracker is constantly updating. She stated the budget was finalized on Friday and it will be shared with the House in the Senate over the next couple of weeks and the Long Bill will be finalized and have the governor’s approval on it. She stated there is a good chance the Navigator positions will be funded past September and UPK will receive a million dollars more to local coordinating organizations. She explained the LCO funding for next year was cut in half and this extra funding is greatly appreciated.

VI. 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.

VII. Community Reports - N/A

VII. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

VIII. Next Meeting — April 22, 2024. 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

Pueblo County Childhood Resources <https://county.pueblo.org/public-health/pueblo-county-childhood-resources>

Statewide Resources

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