



**Pueblo Early
Childhood Council**

MEETING MINUTES APRIL 22, 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
Lycynthia Atencio-OJC
Alexander Winters-PECC/Children First
Josette Rusk-SSCC
Emilee Lopez-CPLC
Ryan Montoya-PECC/Children First
Paula Arellano-PECC/Children First
Frankie Boone-DHS/CCCAP
Gina Lopez-Ferguson-Caring for Colorado
Maria Chavez-Contreras-Catholic Charities
Joe Bellavia-PECC/Children First
Cindy Keasling-D70

Tiffany Garcia-DVR
Darla Hall-PECC/Children First
Katrina Appel-Colorado BlueSky
Angie Shehorn-PECC/Children First
Dwanette Martinez-Migrant
Rita Samora-ECEMS
Matt Guy-Common Thread
Hunter Johnson-PECC/Children First
Christina Hopewell-PDPHE
Maricela Palma-ECEMS
Rebecca Bellavia-PECC/Children First
Berlinda Perdo-OJC
Jerrica Chacon-Health Solutions

I. Introduction: Meeting called to order by Angie at 11:01 am.

II. Additions to the Agenda: N/A

III. Approval of Minutes: March 2024-approved.

**IV. Agency Highlight-
Tiffany Garcia-Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Tiffany stated she has been in the position for three years but prior to that she worked at Catholic Charities. She explained the information she will be sharing is intended solely as informal guidance and should not be used for determining legal rights or responsibilities under the law. She stated at DVR they believe all people with disabilities can choose a career path leading to long term meaningful independence, so that anyone with a disability who wants to work can work, no matter the type or the severity of their disability. Tiffany explained they seek to be a resource and network with businesses on behalf of the individuals. She details how disability is defined according to the ADA.

- A person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity
- A person who has a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability
- A person who does not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability

Tiffany stated a disability can be apparent or nonapparent, born with or developed over time, experienced temporarily or permanently, or multiple types of disabilities. She explained DVR can assist financially with purchasing hearing aids for example to help an individual to keep working. She stated DVR provides services to those documented with a mental, physical, or developmental disability. Tiffany explains the DVR six step process.

1. Initial Engagement - meet with counselor
2. Eligibility Determination - 60 days to determine eligibility
3. IPE-Individual Plan for Employment - align services and goals within 90 days
4. Services Provided - Services activated based on needs, goals and requirements
5. Employment - Lead to occupational goal and employment
6. Closure – After 90 days case closure discussion

Tiffany explained she is the Lead Business Outreach Specialist for the State in the Business Relations Unit linking businesses to talent resources servicing Pueblo, La Junta, Lamar, Walsenburg and Trinidad. She stated their four core priorities are recruitment, retention, education and partnership. She stated DVR has offices for individuals seeking services across the state. <https://dvr.colorado.gov/business-services/contact-business-realitions> Nearest DVR Office - <https://dvr.colorado.gov/about-us/contact-us> Tiffany.Garcia@state.co.us 719-544-1406 A discussion ensued.

V. New Business:

A. SECC Update

Matt Guy-Common Thread Group

Matt stated the coalition members attended the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference and to see how far ahead they are compared to the rest of the state. He stated they learned about voice. He mentioned a challenge regarding enrichment programs to connect parents to these programs. He stated anyone with information about programs in the community can send the information to Angie. He stated they are following up with the school districts on their implementation of suspension and expulsion programs to help eliminate them.

B. UPK Updates

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie shared the UPK updates for April.

- Nearly 1000 4-year old's are attending Universal Preschool
- August-April nearly \$5 million has been infuses into Pueblo community
- Matching and Enrollment-Pre-Registration, Family Matching, Non-IEP Direct Enrollment, IEP Direct Enrollment

Angie proceeded to explain four-year old's are the only age group that can apply for Universal Preschool and three-year old's by October must go to the school district in which they live. Angie reported the quality standard updates.

- CDEC must establish Quality Standards that each preschool provider must meet to receive funding
- Quality Standards must reflect national and community-informed best practices with regard to school readiness, academic and cognitive development, healthy environments, social-emotional learning and child and family outcomes
- CDEC shall consider Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) standards, national standards, Licensing requirements and the balance of availability and quality

- CDEC is required to review and as necessary revise the Quality Standards at least every five years

She reviewed the timeline and details and stated she will send out the PowerPoint. Angie asked for help with policies and processes on screening, referrals, and/or engaging families by using <https://bit.ly/3V6MLkq> to upload that information. Angie mentioned the LCO, Children First, serving six counties took a 46% cut on funding for next year but the two UPK employees will not be affected due to the change of job descriptions to include UPK and other duties as assigned.

C. Fun Fair-Debrief

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated it was a fun event with many people in attendance. She stated feedback was positive-participants liked the face painter and dancers. She stated Children First will be setting next years date. She asked for ideas for vendors.

D. Tree of Life-Debrief

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated the celebration had great weather. She stated we had great participants and a moment of silence for Maria Subia and the children from East Side Children’s Center sang her favorite song “Los Colores”. She stated a local publisher read the children’s book “Feed, Sprout, Spice”, about Pueblo chili, written by her sister and illustrated by her other sister. She mentioned Children First paid for each child to receive the book. She mentioned the Mayor, a City Council Member, other community partners, and parents attended.

E. EQIT

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie explained Children First does not have two approved trainers to have the class but can help find a class online for those interested. She stated at this time it is getting less and less financially viable to offer the class but if and when Children First is able to afford to get someone trained then it could be brought back to our community.

F. Illuminate Pinwheel Breakfast

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie reported she and her team will be attending the Illuminate Pinwheel Breakfast in Denver. She stated she will be receiving the Dynamic Leadership Award.

G. Legislative Tracker

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie included the link for the Legislative Tracker.

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 –

Children First- Teresa Mathews mentioned the Southern Colorado Business Conference on April 27, 2024. Angie stated the conference registration is full but if anyone was interested in having a vendor table reach out to Children First. Angie requested agencies that would be willing to highlight their program to make the PECC Meetings beneficial reach out to her as there are open slots.

Chicanos Por La Causa-Emilee Lopez stated the Head Start program is open for applications for the 2024-2025 school year. She stated anyone with questions can contact her. She stated they currently do not have offices for their administrative staff but are working on finding a space.

Catholic Charities-Maria Chavez-Contreras reported they are hosting their second annual fundraising event through HIPPY, Friday, May 17, 2024 at the Convention Center to congratulate the children graduating and moving into kindergarten. She stated the event is free and will provide breakfast.

VII. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.

VIII. Next Meeting — May 27, 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