



Pueblo Early
Childhood Council

MEETING MINUTES MAY 22, 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:

Emilee Alcon-SCCOHS	Katrina Appel-Colorado Blue Sky
Gina Lopez-Ferguson-Caring for Colorado	Lycynthia Atencio-OJC
Teresa Mathews-PECC/Children First	JoAnne Collins- Trinity Lutheran
Brenda Rodriguez-PECC/Children First	Angie Shehorn-PECC/Children First
Rebecca Bellavia-PECC/Children First	Angela Vigil-Mariposa
Dwanette Martinez-Migrant Education/D70	Maricela Palma-ECEMS@CSU
Kristie Dorwart-Health Solutions	Berlinda Perdo-OJC/Head Start
Rhonda Dusky-Kochis-SCCOHS	Vanessa Mateo-OJC
Matt Guy-PECC/Common Thread Group	Rita Samora-ECEMS@CSU
Caitlyn Stafford-LENA Grow	Darla Hall-PECC/Children First

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

II. Additions to the Agenda: N/A

III. Approval of Minutes: April 2023

IV. Agency Highlight

A. LENA Grow

Caitlyn Stafford caitlynstafford@lena.org <https://learn.lena.org/grow-trainings>

Caitlyn explained LENA is a national nonprofit organization founded in Boulder, CO roughly eighteen years ago. She stated they work nationwide and around the world, becoming the global standard for measuring talk in early childhood. Caitlyn stated they started with research, but the goal is to put this type of data into the hands of parents and teachers. She explained the following programs they offer.

1. LENA Grow- Make every interaction count in early childhood.
2. LENA Start- Build school readiness and strengthen families with parent-group classes. (In Libraries)
3. LENA Home- Add an early language focus to any home visiting program.
4. LENA SP- Gain early language insights in research and clinical applications.

She stated they are associated with early talk where conversational turns are linked to:

- Brain Structure
- Brain Function
- Reading Skills
- IQ Scores
- Socioemotional Development
- Vocabulary skills

- Language, executive functioning and reasoning scores

She reported the research and data has shown across the country in early childcare environments are only 15 turns per hour as opposed to 40 turns per hour. Caitlyn explained the progression of LENA Grow throughout the state of Colorado from 2017 to 2022 and the partnering with ECCs and other agencies. She explained there is LENA program with a feedback cycle that uses a Talk pedometer that tracks conversation. She stated it starts with a LENA day, leading to coaching and feedback leading to practice therefore increasing interaction and children ready for kindergarten. She stated early childhood participants can do five or ten weeks of coaching sessions. Caitlyn explained the details of the report and the inclusion chart for each child and the increases that impact children's language and literacy. She stated they have been partnering with HULA and ECHO (Early Childhood Health Outdoors) councils and now are bringing LENA Grow support to PECC and its 11 counties in Colorado. A discussion ensued.

B. Health Solutions IOP (Intensive Outpatient Program)

Kristie Dorwart-Health Solutions

Kristie stated Health Solutions has an early childhood team embedded in multiple centers across Pueblo, Las Animas, and Walsenburg counties, helping support teachers/directors with social emotional development within the classroom. She specified a treatment for outpatient counseling, which is billed to insurances or can be free (early childhood is funded through office of early childhood-THB), between three-to five-year-old children, Monday through Friday 8am to 11am. Kristie stated there are children struggling emotionally. She stated they also work with the parents and use conscious discipline to engage parents and work with the center's teacher/director. Kristie stated they offer support so that children can remain in school/programs. A discussion ensued.

V. New Business:

A. UPK Update

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated there were 22,000 families in the first round of matching but only 19,000 families were matched with programs. She explained the process and families have until June 8th to accept their matches, ending match two. She stated families have issues with the system recognizing birthdays therefore there will be a review to fix. She reported there is over \$22 million in nicotine tax dollars over the original budget, and it will be on the ballot in November allowing voters to decide if the department can keep the funds to further UPK. She emphasized this will not affect the funding for UPK for this year. She reported in Pueblo there were 1189 applications and across the 6-county region there were 1550 applications. Angie stated CDEC expected 1600 applications for our region. Discussion ensued.

B. [Legislative Tracker](#)

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated the link will open the spreadsheet to track Colorado Legislation. She highlighted child abuse neglect and reporting going public and stated it has been tabled infinitely.

C. CCCAP (Colorado Child Care Assistance Program) Work

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie reported there will be changes to CCCAP. She stated they want to move away from the market rate survey representing cost of childcare and move to the actual cost of care based on a higher accreditation system. She reported they want to move towards slot based as opposed to attendance based for all communities. Angie stated that they will work on rules to be a cohesive state system. She stated the state will submit rule

changes to the federal government in September of 2023 and in September 2024 changes will take place.

D. RV

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie mentioned the RV was not being used by the parents in services and therefore the RV staff have resigned. She reported Illuminate will take back the responsibility and find services in need of childcare.

E. New Positions

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated Children First is hiring a Professional Development Assistant for our 11-county region. She stated they will help with logistics, surveys and scheduling training. She stated there will also be two UPK positions-Family Specialists focusing on families and an Implementation Specialist aiding programs. Angie reported the positions are year-round and full-time. [PCC Careers](#)

VI. Subgroups: on hiatus

VII. Community Reports

Gina Ferguson-Packard Fund for Pueblo-Packard's Community Impact Cycle opens May 31 with a part one deadline July 9th. She informed the council nonprofits can apply with the max amount being \$25,000. She stated the advisory board supports early childhood initiatives. gferguson@caringforcolorado.org 719-425-2103

Kristie Dorwart- Health Solutions-Kristie stated their licensed childcare center is working towards a therapeutic preschool.

Angela Vigil-YWCA-Angela reported they finally received all permits to start construction, and their preschool will should open in August. She stated they started the floor plans for the pool project has started and they will eventually have an infant room, toddler room, preschool room for twenty children and a drop-in room for up to forty children. Angela said the work on the housing unit has started and will supply a drop-in childcare center too.

Brenda Rodriguez-Children First-Brenda gave a shot out to Rita at ECEMS and her staff for attending the Trauma Informed Training as well as Ascencion Preschool.

VII. Evaluation Process

Eileen Dennis

Matt 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.

VIII. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:38 pm.

IX. Next Meeting — July 24, 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 Child Care 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