



**Pueblo Early
Childhood Council**

MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 23, 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
Sarah Martinez-CDPHE
Matt Guy-Common Thread
Alexander Winters-PECC/Children First
Tonya Garcia-SSCC1
Lycynthia Ascensio-OJC
Josette Rusk-SSCCC
Darena Herschler-CDPHE/CTC
Frankie Boone-DHS/CCCAP
Angie Shehorn-PECC/Children First
Gina Wilburn-DHS/CCCAP
Joe Bellavia-PECC/Children First

Gina Ferguson-CFC
Darla Hall-PECC/Children First
Katrina Appel-Colorado Blue Sky
Gina Wilburn-DHC/CCCAP
Dwanette Martinez-Migrant
Mari Palma-ECEMS
Paula Arellano-PECC/Children First
Hunter Johnson-PECC/Children First
Angela Velazquez-OJC
Emilee Lopez-CPLC
Rebecca Bellavia-PECC/Children First
Berlinda Perdo-OJC

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

II. Additions to the Agenda: N/A

III. Approval of Minutes: August 2024-approved.

IV. Agency Highlight-N/A

V. New Business:

A. SECC Update

Matt Guy-Children First

Matt stated the SECC parent coalition is going ahead with three priority areas for next year. He stated suspension and expulsion (zero to six) is one because it is an issue in the community, and they are following through with their commitment. He encouraged everyone to provide stories regarding programs in the community both positive and negative to ensure resources are available and state law is being followed. Matt stated these stories should be sent to his email. He stated the second project is to find out what enrichment and extracurricular activities are available for children zero to six in the community (availability, acceptance, expansion plans, and costs). He stated with this information they can determine if a fund or resources are needed to assist parents in

paying for the activities. He stated the third project the coalition is working on is improving connections and resources for caregivers who are not conditional (grandparents, aunts, uncles, adopted parents, friends, and foster parents). He mentioned the group is vetting an employee assistance program run by Common Spirit and will share once these resources come to the community. Matt discussed the survey sent out to all early childhood program providers asking questions regarding practices of suspension and expulsion, what works, and what is not working. He stated in the first year they received quite a few responses and in the second year not enough to make it valid. He mentioned the survey was long, but it was based on a survey CDPHE, partners, and partner researchers performed statewide in 2020. Matt stated the coalition survey will be revised with just thirteen questions and sent again at the end of October to provide data.

Matt@commonthread.org

B. UPK Update

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated the following:

- Working on matching children with a program
- Matching children with other than parent choice programs
- Working with parents willing to be on a waitlist for preferred program
- November build will start for programs participating next school year
- Payments have been a challenge due to changes
- Families will apply earlier for the next school year to avoid issues with placement

C. ECCLA

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie stated she attended two days of meetings pertaining to emergency preparedness not just for childcare programs. She emphasized that all the bases be covered should an emergency arise within our agency and our employees within our agency. She stated the resources will be shared so that other agencies can set up their own emergency plan. Angie informed everyone of the new legislation that ensures emergency shelters allow an animal to stay with the owner or allow the animal to be located on the same premises. She stated emergency shelters can no longer decline pets for emergency placement due to fire, or other disasters. Angie addressed the RFA, that councils must apply for every five years, is coming up in November. She stated she will be sending out the new MOU's (Memorandum of Understanding) for participants to sign and send back to her. She explained there are three different levels of membership to select from. Angie reported there is a request for letters of support from those required partners and she will reach out to this group. She informed the council attendees the turnaround for the RFA is four to six weeks. Angie stated the application for the UPK/LCO (Local Coordinating Organization) for six counties in Southeast Colorado is open and Children First will be reapplying with the need for letters of support from all twenty school districts, early childhood councils, programs, and communities). She stated a discussion about the Governors preliminary budget is rumored to have substantial cuts. Angie stated if cuts are drastic calculations will be configured to backfill the cuts.

D. Healthy Halloween

Angie Shehorn-Children First

Angie reported Healthy Halloween will be on October 29, 2024, at Praise Assembly Church on Troy Avenue from 9:00 am to 11:30 am. She informed those who want to participate that they can reach out to her for the contact information.

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 –

CPLC-Emilee reported there are several openings for employment. She stated the information can be found at cplc.org. She stated their employment issues revolve around the requirement of a bachelor's degree to apply. She requested everyone encourage qualified applicants to apply. Angie mentioned job openings can also be found on the job board at PDPHE (Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environments) under the early childhood resources page as well as all jobs in early childhood.

Catholic Charities-Maria stated the HIPPY program started their year and are enrolling families with parents of preschoolers. She encouraged those working with any families that could utilize additional support at home to prepare their child for kindergarten send families to Catholic Charities to sign up.

Children First-Angie reminded everyone if their agency would like to participate in an early childhood council meeting with an agency highlight at an upcoming meeting they should reach out to her.

VII. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 11:32 am.

VIII. Next Meeting — October 28, 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