



**Pueblo Early  
Childhood Council**

# MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 26, 2022 VIRTUALLY VIA WEBEX

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## 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:

Kayana Casias-PDPHE	Ida Rhodes-Catholic Charities
Hannah Kochen-PDPHE	Angela Vigil- YWCA
Molly Milusnic-PECC/Children First	Mari Palma-ECEMS
Brenda Rodriguez-PECC/Children First	Amanda Rosales-Children First
Valerie Maldonado-Children First	Matt Guy-Common Thread Group
Dwanette Martinez-Migrant Education/D70	Teresa Mathews-PECC/Children First
Paula Arellano-PECC/Children First	Maria Subia-ESCCC
Rebecca Bellavia-PECC/Children First	Gina Lopez-Ferguson-Caring for Colorado

**I. Introductions:** Meeting called to order by Paula at 11:07 am.

**II. Additions to the Agenda:** N/A

**III. Approval of Minutes:** August 2022

**IV. Agency Highlight- Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program**

Hannah Kochen-Health Promotion Specialist-PDPHE

Hannah presented the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program from the Health Department. She explained Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program is about preventing teen pregnancy as well as puberty, different forms of birth control, healthy relationships and different types of STIs/STDs and preventions/treatments. She reviewed presentations for Middle School Youth, Adults, and High School Students. Hannah reviewed the @GoAskTara free website and free confidential texting service. Hannah explained the goal of the Family Planning Clinic and services offered.

- Providing low-cost effective care for anyone wanting to prevent pregnancies and STDs.
- Provide STI testing and treatment
- Family Planning services are based on a sliding fee scale
- Education and resources
- Well-women exams
- Birth Controls
- Cancer screenings
- Pre-pregnancy counseling
- Free condoms
- STI tests and treatments

Hannah informed everyone the Family Planning Clinic is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment, and open Monday and Wednesday 9 AM to 3 PM and Tuesdays, Thursday, and Fridays 8 AM to 4:30 PM. 719-583-4380. [Kochenh@pueblounty.us](mailto:Kochenh@pueblounty.us) 719-583-4342

## V. New Business:

### A. SECC

Matt Guy-Common Thread Group <http://www.commonthread.group/>

Matt explained there have been significant, successful efforts to improve early childhood in Pueblo over the past several years. He stated the challenge for many families is accessing and retaining early childhood resources. He proceeded to explain the next two important steps.

- Suspensions and Expulsions
  - There is no evidence to support suspensions and/or expulsions as an effective way to resolve early childhood behavioral issues.
  - Early childhood suspensions and expulsions have been the focus of recent Colorado Legislative action for school-based programs.
  - There is no community standard for early childhood suspension or expulsion practices.
- Community Investment Plan
  - Care providers, schools, and service agencies face a set of disjointed programs, incentives, and systems.
  - The current school readiness landscape lacks the stature, coordination, and alignment necessary to support the holistic preparation of Pueblo's youngest residents for success at school.

Matt explained both are important because key first investments are needed in connecting resources to improve social-emotional child and family wellbeing. He stated all Pueblo County early childhood providers need to rise up to state requirements for suspension and expulsion. He stated a community-led accountability team to oversee early childhood local investments and review supporting policies needed to be created. Matt reviewed the Pueblo comprehensive, holistic school readiness plan vision.

- Families and children achieve their full potential
  - Families are flourishing
  - Early care and education are accessible, high quality, and meet family needs
  - Children grow up healthy
  - Communities are prepared to support children

He explained the Plan is a roadmap for building a system in Pueblo for community "investment for success" in school readiness efforts community level.

- Investment Areas
  - Family Connection to Early Education
  - Thriving Families
  - Healthy Families
  - Community Responsiveness to Family's Needs

Matt explained the key investments for early childhood practitioners. He explained SECC is the main community accountability group for the investment plan and Early childhood professional's suspension/expulsion on policy changes- Majority parent or caregivers of young children, Early childhood professionals, and Community leaders. He stated SECC will be piloting distributing funds to Pueblo groups in 2023. Matt asked the council to reach out to parents and caregivers of young children to participate in SECC.

### B. Universal Preschool Community Planning Meetings

Paula Arellano (Children First)- Paula asked for the council members to watch out for invitations to virtual community meetings to create a community plan. She stated emails will be going out the last week of September. She encouraged everyone to share the emails with others.

### C. Healthy Halloween

Paula Arellano (Children First) – Paula informed the council the CSU-Pueblo Nursing Department and Children First are hosting the in-person Healthy Halloween event. She stated the event will be on Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, between 9am and noon, at Praise Assembly at 2000 Troy Ave., Pueblo, CO. Paula stated the event is for children ages 0-5 and there will be games, prizes and treats.

- D. ECE Expo**  
Paula Arellano (Children First)-Paula stated SBDC and Children will host the Early Childhood Education Expo on October 15 at the Fortino Ballroom on the Pueblo Community College Campus in the Fortino Ballroom (second floor) at 900 West Orman, Pueblo. She stated the event will offer education and connect childcare providers to supportive resources available through various local agencies. She mentioned breakfast will be provided and someone may qualify for a free laptop.
- E. Bright by Text Lunch and Learn**  
Paula Arellano (Children First) – Paula asked council members to join Bright by Text for a Lunch & Learn to learn about their innovative text message platform that connects caregivers to critical developmental information about their child or pregnancy, in addition to local services and events. She stated they will discuss how organizations can sign families up and how organizations can leverage the platform to send targeted text messages to caregivers in their area that promote local programs like parenting classes, food distributions and preschool enrollment. She stated lunch will be provided! Please RSVP here: <http://evite.me/yb3Q1rNwHK>
- F. Why WebEx?**  
Paula Arellano (Children First)-Paula informed the council due to time restraints with other meeting sites, Children First will be using WebEx as the primary meeting link for future PECC Meetings.
- G. PECC Chair**  
Paula Arellano (Children First) - Paula announced Darlene Bermudez has stepped down as the PECC Chair effectively immediately. She stated PECC is soliciting nominations for a new Chair through the end of the month. She stated in October an email vote will be held with the new chair assuming the role for the October meeting.

**VI. Sub Groups: (subgroups): on hiatus**

**VII. Community Reports**  
N/A

**VII. Evaluation Process**

Eileen Dennis

Angie stated Eileen Dennis from Triple Aim will be sending an evaluation (1-5 rating with feedback) email after every council meeting. Darlene stated your contributions will be appreciated. Eileen will compile and share those reports. The information is received in aggregate.

**VIII. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 12:04 pm.

**IX. Next Meeting — October 24, 2022 HYBRID Virtually via WebEx**

**[WebEx Meeting Link](#)**

**Local Resources**

Children First Child Care Connections – [www.childrenfirstco.org](http://www.childrenfirstco.org)  
Pueblo County Childhood Resources <https://county.pueblo.org/public-health/pueblo-county-childhood-resources>

**Statewide Resources**

[www.coloradoshines.com](http://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