



**Pueblo Early
Childhood Council**

MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 22 , 2021 VIRTUALLY 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:

Angie Shehorn-PECC/Children First
Jennifer Walters-PECC/Children First
Lindsey Dunbar-PDPHE
JoAnn Collins-Trinity Early Learning
Akemi Moore-PDPHE
Niki Gill-Adams- IREE Inc
Dana Richardson- Life Center Academy
Darlene Bermudez-D60

Emilee Alcon-Catholic Charities
Kristen Boss-IREE Inc
Cammile Espinosa-IREE Inc
Darlene Bermudez-D60
Justin Gage-PDPHE
Rebecca Bellavia-PCDHS
Molly Milusnic-PECC/Children First
Veronica Ibarra-ELV

I. Introductions: Meeting called to order by Angie at 11:10 am.

II. Additions to the Agenda: N/A

III. Approval of Minutes: Angie called for the approval of October 2021 minutes as submitted. The minutes are approved.

IV. Agency Highlight-Institute for Racial Equity and Excellence

Niki Gill-Adams-IREE

Niki, Executive Director of Community Based Licensing, introduced the Licensing specialists that oversee Pueblo- Cammile Espinosa-Licensing Supervisor, Kristen Boss-Lead Licensing Specialist in Pueblo, and Linda Wright. She explained IREE is a contractor with the state, through the Department of Human Services, under the Office of Early Childhood, in the Division of Early Care and Learning. She stated they exist as a licensing team to insure children are in licensed care that is safe and healthy, for an optimal learning environment. Niki stated they support continuous quality improvement and collaborate within a coordinated system to ensure children are ready for kindergarten and reading by 3rd grade. She reported the State Department delivers community based services through contracting. She reported they govern Child Care Centers and Preschools, Family Child Care Homes, School-Age Programs, Neighborhood Youth Organizations, and Residential Child Care Facilities. She emphasized each of their rules set have an administrative guide to provide individuals with resources. Niki explained the bidding process all licensing contractors go through every 5 years. She stated they will have annual visits every eleven months to rectify concerns-health and safety with a personalized licensing experience. Niki addresses race and equity based on data sets. She explains their approach is based on compliance, compassion and competence. A discussion ensued.

a. Mission-To change the hearts and practices of those working with communities of color to ensure equity and social justice at all levels of society.

b. Goals-Support children, families, and communities by addressing inequities that result from implicit and explicit biases. Partner with agencies and organizations to enhance awareness of biases and take action to prevent, reduce, and eliminate inequitable practices. Identify and eliminate practices and policies that privilege "some" at the expense of "others". Dismantle the preschool to prison pipeline.

- c. Licensing**
 - Licensing-Delivering Licensing Services
 - Join community efforts
 - Provide training and technical services
- d. Mental Health**
 - Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
 - State Organization for Equity Training and Justice Impacted Mental Health Consultations
 - Suspensions and Explosions
 - Racism and Discrimination
- e. Equity and Justice**
 - Family Support and Advocacy
 - Community Organizing
 - Coordination of Education and Learning
- f. Culturally Responsive Community Based Model**
 - Respectful-building authentic relationships
 - Reciprocal-creating connections with providers
 - Informative
- g. Elements of Culture**
 - Culture that already exists
 - Culture we bring
 - Culture that is created
- h. Specific Goals**
 1. Personal Licensing Experiences
 2. Supporting providers improves the lives of children
 3. Continuous improvement in customer service
 4. Earning trust through absolute transparency

Rules for Centers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwTec1bxY8I&feature=youtu.be>

Black Babies Awareness Month Resources: <https://equity-coalition.fpg.unc.edu/resources/>

Directors, Owners, and Leaders of Color:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYrdOCtrigiGNw0YOMWXQZPRqHZAXEyZkGH>

Community Open Forum:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYldu2vrzItHtPv6fIq3e7aayCQkkA7H_if

ECE Mental Health Consultation Referral Form:

https://www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/OEC_ECMHReferralForm?lang=en

V. New Business:

A. Pueblo Community Perspective

Angie Shehorn (Children First)-Darlene expressed her appreciation for Children First keeping the council abreast of different feeds of funding and opportunities. Angie asked anyone to reach out with questions.

1. With all of the exciting things happening in Early Childhood,
 - a. What questions do you have? N/A
 - b. What concerns do you have? N/A

B. Mobile Child Care-Update

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated there will be postings for two positions for the early childhood professionals working in the mobile child care RV as well as driving the RV. She mentioned Illuminate is going to Pueblo on November 23rd for a small tour of some agencies interested in partnering with the mobile child care unit to be housed at their facility while parents are inside getting treatment for mental health or addiction. Angie stated the RV has arrived in Denver and is currently being remodeled to resemble early childhood classrooms. She invited everyone to the press release in March.

C. ECE Job Board-Update

Akemi Moore (Pueblo Department of Health and Human Services)

Akemi excitedly reported on the public county childhood resource webpage. She presented a video to be sent out after the meeting. She explained why the resource webpage is needed.

She mentioned it is a great opportunity to share resources in one place. Akemi stated it is a huge collaborative effort within the community. (Children First, Health Solutions, DHS: CCCAP program, PDPHE Programs: WIC, Immunization Division, Lead Prevention Program, Family Friendly Pueblo County, Communities that Care, Breastfeeding Coalition) She stated the webpage launched September 2021 featuring the community events calendar, early childhood job board, GIS interactive map of Pueblo County childcare homes and centers in Pueblo County. Akemi asked if anyone has events or information they want to add to the webpage reach out to Angie.

<https://county.pueblo.org/public-health/pueblo-county-childhood-resources>

D. New Rules and Regulations Town Hall Meeting Update

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated the town hall meeting occurred last week and they are updating some of the rules that will go into effect December 1st specific to centers. She asked if anyone was interested there will be six months of consultations so if you have questions, the contact information is on the Office of Early Childhood website. Darlene mentioned the changes are highlighted.

VI. Sub Groups: (subgroups); please read mission statement

A. Social Emotional – Lindsey Dunbar/Wendy Romero

Lindsey mentioned there are providers' waiting for ASQ trainings. She stated the next meeting is Wednesday, December 1st from 1pm to 2pm due to the Thanksgiving Holiday. She invited all to share any ideas with the subgroup or how they could move forward in the upcoming year at their next meeting. Lindsey stated after speaking to Angie, having a training around grief and loss regarding young children.

Meeting: <https://pueblohealth-org.zoom.us/j/84557559101>

dunbar@pueblocounty.us / gwendolynr@health solutions

B. Early Care and Learning- Rita Samora and Mari Palma

N/A

C. Family Connects –Emilee Alcon

Emilee reported there was low turnout for last week's meeting. She mentioned they are skipping the December meeting but will meet January 18th at 2 pm over Zoom. She stated they meet every 3rd Tuesday of the month and she will send out a Zoom invite.

D. Health and Wellness Advisory - Justin Gage

Justin stated they met. He asked for support from council members to join the subgroup. He mentioned they will be working with PCC at St. Mary Corwin for collaboration with the nursing department. He mentioned continued support providing education and information to the Community Baby Shower and Healthy Halloween hosted by the CSUP Nursing department. They meet every third month on the second Wednesday, next meeting February 9, 2022 at 1pm via Zoom.

VII. Community Reports:

- **Catholic Charities**-Emilee stated Catholic Charities is changing their name to Catholic Charities in Southern Colorado to encompass all the work they do not just in Pueblo County. She stated they would like to expand their services to surrounding counties.
- **District 60**-Darlene mentioned the district preschool program is fairly full but are always taking applications via online. She stated there are openings on an as needed basis but in January they will be accepting applications for the new school year.
- **Children First**-Angie mentioned there is a job posting for an Early Childhood Coach on the PCC website. She also stated as soon as it goes through the college process, they will be posting for a licensed childcare navigator as well as two early childhood professionals to man the mobile child care RV. Angie also stated if anyone has openings for their early childhood programs, send them to her for posting on the new website.
- **Communities That Care**-Akemi stated they are looking for parent advocates they can pay from new grants, to join the meetings. She mentioned they want to get the parent insight to stay equitable.

VIII. Evaluation Process

Eileen Dennis

Darlene 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.

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

X. Next Meeting: The next meeting is Monday, January 24, 2022 at 11:00 am. Location: Virtually via Webex.

Local Resources

Children First Child Care Connections – www.childrenfirstco.org

Early Minds Matter - <https://www.earlymindsmatter.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