

Early Childhood Council

of LARIMER COUNTY

2023-2024
Impact Report

Connecting the Dots

The Power of Connection

Dear Early Childhood Champions,

The past year at Early Childhood Council of Larimer County (ECCLC) has been one dedicated to inspiring change through collaboration. Like the first 25 years of our existence, we continue to lead county-wide efforts to ensure more children benefit from high-quality, affordable early care, wellness, and education. We do this through our training, coaching, and early childhood mental health consultation in and out of the classroom, our advocacy work locally and statewide, our commitment to developing a talented and skilled staff, and our dedication to fostering partnerships throughout the community. By connecting the dots internally and externally, we are deepening our impact.

We remain committed to developing a local, sustainable funding source for early care, wellness, and education in Larimer County. Our partnership and memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Larimer County Commissioners is further testament to the validity and need for collaboration in bringing a sales tax measure to the ballot. We also continue to work closely with United Way of Larimer County to provide much-needed scholarships for working families through the Larimer Child Care Fund.

We were a founding partner of the Loveland Youth Campus, a collaboration among Boys and Girls Clubs of Larimer County, Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center, and United Way of Larimer County. The Loveland Youth Campus offers childcare and out-of-school programs in one convenient location, making life easier for working families.

Grounded in what we've done well the past two decades, we think creatively, connecting people and resources to new ideas to continue to move the needle for early care, wellness, and education. Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm for our mission. Together, we will continue to connect the dots to ensure every young child's health and education are prioritized from the start.

Thank you!



Christina N. Taylor, MPH
Chief Executive Officer



Steve Kuehneman,
Board President



When you see the square icons, scan them with the camera on your phone to visit a webpage with more information.



Agency Values

In 2022, our team identified and defined our agency values, which have been incorporated into all facets of our work—from job descriptions to annual reviews. These values serve as a guidepost for how we approach our day-to-day work, helping us keep our "why" front and center.

Collaboration

We consistently and proactively collaborate with both internal and external partners and with individuals and organizations who represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. We demonstrate respectful behavior toward others, regardless of their background.

Recognition

We regularly offer recognition for others and seek out feedback and opportunities for growth. We work to ensure that ECCLC is recognized as a strong and respected partner in the community. We take initiative to understand and recognize how bias, both implicit and explicit, shows up in our work and throughout the early childhood system.

Accountability

We demonstrate ownership of our work, accountability to partners and peers, embody a solutions-focused attitude, and connect our work to the mission, vision and goals of ECCLC. We understand that work to advance our agency competencies in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is never complete and we are committed to being lifelong learners.

Excellence

We model integrity, take risks, learn from mistakes and strive to deliver undeniably good work in all aspects of our agency. We model work/life balance, and set appropriate boundaries to ensure success. We welcome opportunities to learn from mistakes and strive to hold ourselves accountable when it comes to advancing our DEI competency.

Joy

We proactively seek ways to find satisfaction and purpose in our day-to-day work and create space for fun and celebration with both internal and external partners.

2023-2024 Highlights



46 Larimer County home-based preschool providers who participated in the first year of Colorado UPK (the most in the entire state!)

2,427 Larimer County 4-year-olds who participated in Colorado UPK

\$14.8 Million in savings for Larimer County families thanks to Colorado UPK support

1,164 Total coaching hours provided by our Early Childhood Coaches to ECE providers

115 People who attended ECCLC's Early Childhood Provider Appreciation Awards

150 Children who benefited from Occupational Therapy pilot programs

6 ECCLC staff who participated in the P3 Centers's Transitions to Kindergarten Summit



Enhanced Be Ready Guide with new workbook

4th Consecutive year of the Early Childhood Mental Health Fellowship with Colorado State University

17 Higher education and professional development scholarships awarded

1 CDEC Pre-Licensing Trainings offered in Spanish

29 Programs that benefited from Early Childhood Mental Health consultation

49 Programs supported by our Early Childhood Coaches

65 Children who benefited from the Larimer Child Care Fund

17 Early care and education providers supported by Emerging and Expanding Grants

1 Grand opening for the Loveland Youth Campus

Hired our first bilingual Community Engagement Associate, Angelica Allison



Championing a Strong Workforce

During the past year, ECCLC was pleased to offer a variety of innovative, interactive trainings and unique funding opportunities to continue to support the early care and education (ECE) workforce. We continue to think differently, engage providers in creating solutions, and work collaboratively with partners to champion a strong workforce.

All Our Kin

This past year, ECCLC introduced All Our Kin as a pilot program for family child care home providers to improve their understanding of the business side of running a child care program and bolster their connections with other professionals in the field. The virtual training is 30 hours of professional development over 10 weeks and covers everything from budgeting to marketing and taxes. Six providers completed the course and received \$150 stipends as well as other incentives throughout the course.

Thanks to the success of the pilot program, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood has provided funding for ECCLC to offer All Our Kin through the end of 2026. ECCLC hopes to soon offer the course in Spanish.

Laura Rouch (pictured above middle with Karly Kampe, top, and other All our Kin participants), a family child care home provider for 20+ years, participated in the All Our Kin program. She decided to create a limited liability company (LLC) for her business as a result of learning about the benefits of doing so during the training.

“It was really cool to see the providers connect. Laura Rouch shared a lot of insights for newer providers.

She went above and beyond and connected with others outside of class, taking on an unofficial mentorship role.”



**-Karly Kampe, Early Childhood Workforce Manager
Pictured (top center) with Laura Rouch (center) and other AOK participants.**

All Our Kin

What:

30 hours of business training and networking, and a one-time \$150 stipend

'24 Impact:

6 family child care home providers



Bilingual Community Engagement Associate

We welcomed Angelica Allison (pictured above left) to the ECCLC staff in February. She has been instrumental in addressing the ongoing need for linguistic access in Larimer County. As the Community Engagement Associate, Angelica supports family child care home recruitment within the bilingual (Spanish speaking) community. She also actively attends community events and is building connections through networking.

Early Childhood Mental Health Fellowship

Nine Colorado State University students participated in the 2024 Early Childhood Mental Health Fellowship Cohort.



Participants were paired with 1 of 5 host sites for in-person internships. Students also met weekly for 16 weeks for a didactic curriculum focused on early childhood mental

4

This marked the fellowship's fourth year!

health resources and organizations in Larimer County. Students were exposed to a wide range of topics and potential career paths, including equity, social justice, grief, trauma-responsive care and advocacy. Participants received a \$3,000 stipend upon program completion.

Many past fellowship participants are now employed with ECCLC partner organizations.

Entrepreneurship Fund

What:

Year-long program that provides coaching, business training opportunities, and one-time \$500 grant to assist with business costs

'24 Impact:

10 family child care home providers

Linguistic Diversity Fund

What:

One-time \$500 incentive for ECE professionals who speak languages other than English in their child care programs.

'24 Impact:

3 ECE professionals

CDEC Pre-Licensing Training

What:

15-hour course required to become a licensed provider

'24 Impact:

25 people through 1 English course and 2 Spanish courses

Fun Fact:

ECCLC was the first in Colorado to offer the course in Spanish!

Scholarships

What:

Funded by the Buell Foundation, higher education and professional development scholarships for current and prospective early childhood education providers

'24 Impact:

Higher education:

13 people (\$12,000 total)

Professional development:

4 people (more than \$5,200)

Making Preschool Possible

Colorado Universal Preschool (UPK) launched for the 2023-2024 school year, marking an unprecedented era for our state and our families. As Larimer County's Local Coordinating Organization (LCO) for Colorado Universal Preschool, ECCLC worked closely with families and providers to make preschool possible for more children.



Larimer UPK Participants

2,427 Larimer County 4-year-olds who participated in Colorado UPK

68% Estimated participation rate of Larimer County 4-year-olds in Colorado UPK

\$6,044 Average amount families received for Colorado UPK support per child

\$14.8 Million in savings for Larimer County families thanks to Colorado UPK support

“UPK was very easy to sign up for. Our daycare center made the experience seamless. Anybody with young children should learn more about UPK so they can see the benefits to their child and the cost savings for their family.”

- Kristin M. Kurbjun,
Mother of two young children and
Colorado UPK participant



Scan to visit
bereadylarimercounty.org

Larimer UPK Providers

151 Total Larimer County preschool providers who participated in Colorado UPK

57% Participation rate of Larimer County preschool providers in Colorado UPK

46 Larimer County home-based preschool providers who participated in the first year of Colorado UPK (the most in the entire state and including Buzzi Bees pictured above with their first graduating class)

Transitions to Kindergarten

Six ECCLC staff attended the National P3 Center's Transitions to Kindergarten Summit in Denver last fall. The National P3 Center works to improve communication and collaboration between educators, organizations, and systems in the birth through 3rd grade space. Our team used the learnings and insights from the summit to host a local Transitions to Kindergarten Summit in March. As a direct result of the summit, we updated our Be Ready Kindergarten Guide with a new workbook to help families and educators bridge the gap between preschool and kindergarten. The updated Be Ready guides were launched in August 2024.

Elevating and *Coaching*

Our team of passionate, talented early childhood coaches and early childhood mental health consultants provide trainings and support inside and outside of the classroom.

<u>Training</u>	<u># of Training Hours</u>	<u># of Participants</u>
Expanding Quality for Infants and Toddlers (EQiT)	48	15
FLIP It	1-4	82
ERS Focus - Interactions, Accessibility, Supportive Environments	1-2	25
Understanding Challenging Behaviors	1-2	102
Foundations of High Quality Practice: Components of Intentional Relationships & Supportive Learning Environments	1	20
Phases in Relationships	1	29
All Our Kin Business Training	30	6
5 R's for Supporting Healthy Brain Development	1	50
Family Child Care Home Pre-Licensing Training	15	25
Infant-Toddler Peer Mentor Group	9	5
Touchpoints	1.5	34
Community of Practice for Directors and Assistant Directors	1	9
Teaching Friendship Skills	1.5	4
Colorado Shines Evidence Guide	1.5	3



Child care providers supported by E&E grants



New child care slots added in Larimer County thanks to E&E grants in FY 23 and FY 24



Emerging and Expanding Grants

In its third year of existence, Emerging and Expanding (E & E) Grants from the Colorado Department of Early Childhood were utilized by early care and education providers to improve their spaces and programs, purchase classroom materials, update their technology, and engage in quality improvement coaching.

Playcrafter Kids used E&E funds to update their learning area (pictured above before on the left and after in the middle and on the right).

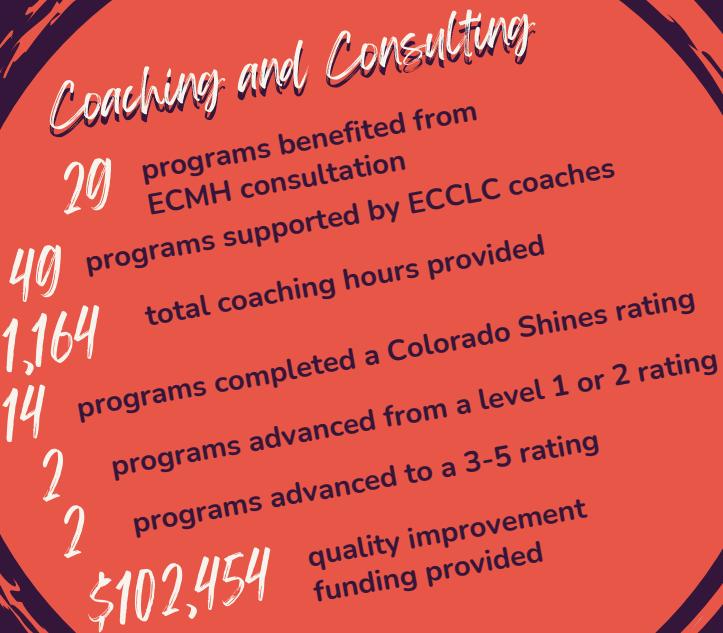
With support from ECCLC's Early Childhood Coaching Team, 17 providers received \$1.3 million in funding this past fiscal year.

Program and Educator Support

ECCLC provides a range of services to assist early care and education professionals in their interactions with young children.

Our Early Childhood Coaches collaborate with individuals who offer direct care to children, licensed family child care home providers, and licensed child care program administrators. These coaches offer assistance for enhancing program quality, participating in Colorado Shines rating assessments, and more.

Our Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants utilize evidence-based strategies to enhance social-emotional and behavioral health outcomes for children, families, and early childhood professionals.



Change through Partnerships

Developing and fostering partnerships continues to be vital to moving our work forward. From the county to community organizations and leaders, we are building connections and creating solutions.

Larimer County

In January, Larimer County Commissioners approved a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MOU) with ECCLC. The MOU outlines a working relationship to consider referring a sales tax measure to the ballot.



Larimer County Manager Lorenda Volker (pictured above left with ECCLC CEO Christina Taylor) was recognized with ECCLC's Early Childhood Systems Builder Award for her innovative thinking in the creation of early childhood systems in Larimer County.



In addition, Larimer County Department of Human Services was recognized with ECCLC's Family Friendly Employer Award for leading the way by only requiring its 500+ employees to work from the office one day per week. Director of Larimer DHS Heather O'Hayre is pictured left with ECCLC's Chief Financial and Operating Officer Lauren Powers.



The graphic is a purple-bordered box containing information about the Loveland Youth Campus. It features the text "LOVELAND YOUTH CAMPUS" in large, bold, blue and orange letters, followed by "An Innovative Place for Learning and Connection" and "We're Open!". Below this are three small images showing children playing with green beads, sitting at a table, and playing with a light-up sensory table. At the bottom, the text "More info at: LovelandYouthCampus.org" is displayed.

Loveland Youth Campus

The first of its kind, Loveland Youth Campus is an innovative community hub offering families comprehensive services under one roof. The campus is located adjacent to the Boys and Girls Clubs' Loveland-Pulliam Club, offering families a seamless continuum of care across all ages.

The campus is a collaboration between the Boys & Girls Clubs of Larimer County (BGCLC) and Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center with support from United Way of Larimer County and ECCLC.

Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center opened at the Loveland Youth Campus in early March 2024. The second floor of the campus will accommodate a network of non-profit organizations providing vital services tailored to the needs of children and families. From mental health support to utility and food assistance, comprehensive support will be readily available within this single, accessible location.

Larimer Child Care Fund

In partnership with United Way of Larimer County, ECCLC administers the Larimer Child Care Fund (LCCF). The fund helps low and moderate-income families afford high-quality care for their children at the licensed providers of their choice. The fund is structured to provide scholarships to families who are not eligible for the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) due to income, mixed immigration status, or other factors. Recipients of the fund do not pay more than 15% of their income on child care for an entire year.

ECCLC is making enhancements for the 2024-2025 funding year to improve the payment process to providers, in hopes of attracting more provider participation. As of the printing of this impact report, 40 families were on the LCCF waitlist.

Inclusive Early Childhood Experiences and Environments

150

Children who benefited from these two pilot programs

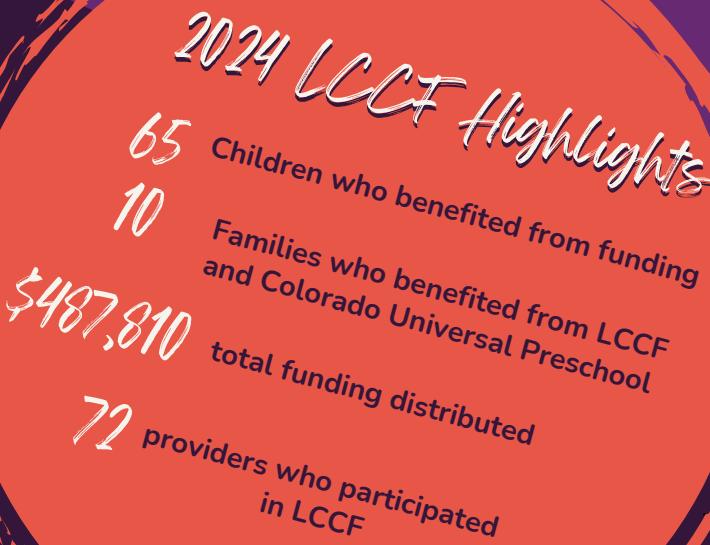
As a pilot program, OT services were embedded year-round (rather than part of the year) at the Early Childhood Center (ECE) at Colorado State University. Through collaboration with the Department of Occupational Therapy at CSU, we supported the creation a professional training manual for the “Occupational Therapy Embedded in Early Care and Education” model so that it can be replicated elsewhere. Funding also supported two additional OT students in completing fieldwork at the ECE, benefiting both students and the ECE.

With support from the City of Fort Collins, ECCLC expanded access to Occupational Therapy (OT) in early care and education and supported the creation of a therapeutic playgroup for children with mixed abilities.

Additionally, this funding supported the creation of a therapeutic play group led by Nicole Booker, a local development specialist. The playgroup is for families with children of all mental and physical abilities. Families with children who have unique needs often feel isolated and the playgroup creates a place where they feel belonging. The playgroup was so popular that it continues to this day as a self-funded project.

Pilot Programs Gain Funding

One of the best signs of success is when programs continue and become embedded in systems, like the Willow Collective’s work to integrate early childhood mental health into processes and programs within the Larimer Department of Human Services and Larimer County Jail and Community Corrections. With funding originally from the Larimer County Behavioral Health Services Grant, the work now has sustainable funding sources, including other grants and consultation support transitioning into direct service.



Connecting & Celebrating

ECCLC prioritizes celebrating successes in the early care and education sector while continuing to inform and inspire the entire community to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive from day one.

Provider Appreciation Event

In December, ECCLC held our second annual awards ceremony for early childhood providers and champions in Larimer County. The event took place at Rio Grande Restaurant in Fort Collins and 115 people attended.



Business Lunch n' Learn

In June, more than 50 people joined ECCLC, the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce and United Way of Larimer County for a robust session featuring Elliot Haspel, a nationally-recognized early childhood and family policy expert, commentator, and author. The event bolstered support for business involvement in solving the child care crisis. Pictured on the left is UWLC CEO Joy Sullivan, Elliot Haspel, and ECCLC CEO Christina Taylor.



Out and About

ECCLC was out and about to educate and inspire the community.

Clockwise from top left: Liz Means, Karly Kampe and Tessa Currie presenting to the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners; Keiko Friar attending NOCO Pride; Heather Blanco and Shannon Silvas tabling Fort Collins Bike to Work Day; Karly Kampe; Liz Means, Tessa Currie and Shannon Silvas trick-or-treating with Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center.



Walking the Walk

ECCLC continues to strive to authentically incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts into our work internally and externally. Every year, we make more progress, yet we have much more to learn and incorporate into our work.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

This past year, ECCLC focused on quality over quantity, using evaluation and effectiveness to inform our DEI efforts. We believe that increasing the diversity of our staff's lived experiences informs the accessibility and effectiveness of our DEI efforts throughout the community.

To that end, we:

- Consistently solicited and reviewed feedback about DEI moments that were included in monthly Advisory Council and staff meetings
- Practiced daily habits of inclusion
- Applied a DEI lens to different groups, roles, and community conversations
- Attended numerous community events and celebrated heritage months
- Provided training, consultation and support to partner organizations:
 - Gender Identity Basics (Riversong Waldorf School)
 - Intro to Microaggressions (Respite Care)
 - Weld County Building Blocks Conference (Aims Community College)



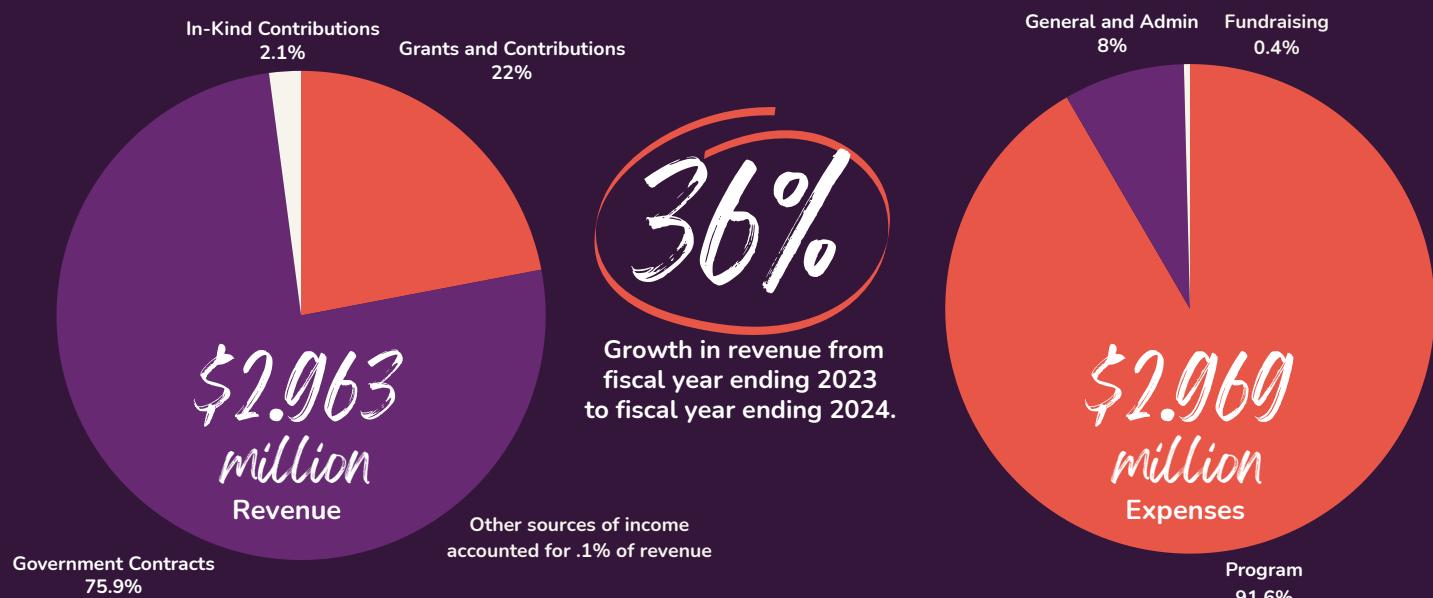
Co-Op of Care Training

For the second year in a row, ECCLC partnered with the BIPOC Alliance to offer a Co-Op of Care Training. The goal is to engage with and provide foundational training and peer support opportunities for community members who are currently offering friend, family, neighbor (FFN) care to young children. Seven people were trained this past spring and 17 people have been trained since the partnership began.



Revenue and Expenses

Consistently, ECCLC receives a clean independent audit, grows revenue, and remains committed to ensuring more than 90% of our expenses are directly related to programs.



Funders, Staff, and Board of Directors

ECCLC is able to connect the dots thanks to the generous support of our funders, staff, and board of directors.

Anonymous Private Foundation
Bohemian Foundation
Buell Foundation
City of Fort Collins
Colorado Department of Early Childhood
Gary Community Ventures
Nordson Corporation Foundation
Larimer County Department of Behavioral Health Services
United Way of Larimer County



Scan for a list of our current staff



Scan for a list of current Board of Directors

Early Childhood Council of LARIMER COUNTY

Early Childhood Council of Larimer County (ECCLC) is an independent nonprofit organization that rallies support, resources, and awareness to ensure every young child in our community has quality early childhood experiences so they thrive from day one.

Whether in Estes Park or Wellington, Red Feather Lakes or Berthoud, every young child benefits from diverse, committed caregivers and engaged professionals in their lives. We know when this happens, children grow up healthier, happier, and ready for success in school and in life.

Early Childhood Council of Larimer County has been striving to dismantle systemic inequities and make this a reality in our community for decades. We work tirelessly and strategically together with everyone important in a young child's life, from parents to teachers, and from physicians to psychologists, to equitably modernize and prioritize early childhood experiences. We provide expert coaching and consultation, build leadership capacity, incubate innovative ideas, spearhead community collaboration, advocate for policies and funding, and design and pilot programs.

We only get one childhood. When every young child is cared for in an environment that invigorates their learning and supports their wellbeing, they are set up for a life of health and happiness, which elevates our entire community. Learn more at ECCLC.org

**There's a local solution to our
childcare crisis in Larimer County.
And it includes YOU.**

LEARN MORE AT LarimerCARE.org