



Community Report 2020



**DENVER'S EARLY
CHILDHOOD COUNCIL**
Shaping Strong Futures Together

Dear Friends,

2020. It has been especially challenging for child care providers -- to stay open, to stay in business, to operate safely, to remain fortified against the stress and strain the year's circumstances have put on mental health, and through it all, maintaining happy, welcoming spaces for children to learn and thrive during uncertain times. To put it another way, the child care sector -- the backbone of our economy -- has been hit particularly hard by the pandemic.

Always placing child care providers at the center of our work, Denver's Early Childhood Council has served as a steward of hope this year, pivoting from business as usual, to supporting providers with access to immediate, concrete measures such as emergency funds, business sustainability measures, health and safety training, emergency supplies, mental health resources, and more.

While the pandemic has created challenges for the way we normally do things, and we miss the person-to-person contact, we have been able to act more nimbly in some ways.

Using our collective expertise and partnership networks, our amazing and accomplished staff:

- Rapidly developed and deployed a health and safety checklist for providers and parents, along with in-person virtual trainings to assist with Q&A.
- Developed and shared a "decision tree" online to help providers decide whether to close or stay open and following that, a checklist of what to think about when deciding to re-open if they had closed.
- In addition to emergency response trainings, developed a series of business support trainings to help keep providers afloat.
- Distributed CARES Act funding.
- Ramped up frequency in communications, with an emphasis on straightforward, "need-to-know" messaging to minimize inundating an already overwhelmed audience.
- Partnered with Mental Health Center of Denver to create an Early Learning Warmline as a resource for stressed caregivers, as well as to provide support to children who may be experiencing trauma due to the pandemic.

Silver linings:

- We navigated the departure of an admired long term Board Chair and ushered in an equally amazing new Board Chair, new Board and Oversight leadership, as well as strategically adding members to our Board and Oversight council - all in a remote environment.
- We have steadily made progress on creating a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) program of our own design, and in the year to come, expect to work with a consulting expert to help guide us through our intentions as Board, Oversight, and Staff.
- Voters passed Proposition EE, with the goals of improving our children's health, providing funding for public schools, and ensuring universal, free preschool for all Colorado kids.
- More emergency funding for child care was passed by the Colorado General Assembly to help in the short term and vaccine distribution is on the horizon.
- And finally, with national attention on child care being essential to economic recovery, we hope to gain momentum on work we are already engaged in to elevate the workforce and level the playing field for the profession.

We invite you to read our brief overview of the past year, and as always, we appreciate your support and interest in our work.

Sincerely,

Emily Bustos, CEO



Mission

Denver's Early Childhood Council elevates the early childhood field through innovative and inclusive leadership, services, and solutions.

Vision

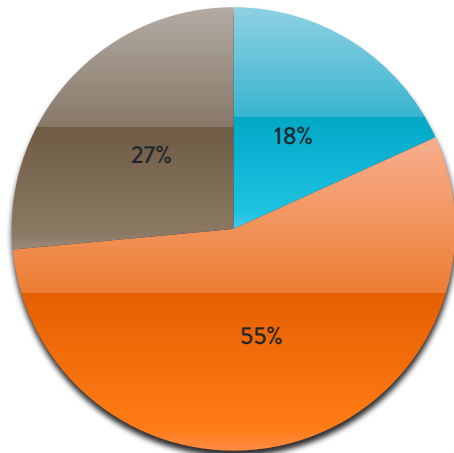
Denver is a community where the diverse needs of all young children and their families are supported.

Quality Initiatives

The Council provides services that enhance quality in up to **500** early education programs across the city and supports the care experience for over **23,000*** children in licensed early education and care.

**(Status of Denver's Children 2019: A Community Resource Report)*

Child care program types



- Family Child Care Home
- Denver Public Schools ECE
- Community Child Care Center

95

programs participated in Colorado Shines Quality Improvement Initiative (CSQI)

259

programs participated in Denver Preschool Program (DPP) including Denver Public Schools sites



1945 hours of coaching* invested in child care programs



319 in-person visits (pre-pandemic)



8301 direct communications with child care providers about improving quality



1200 emergency support/outreach contacts

**in partnership with Clayton Early Learning*

\$1.3 Million

invested to enhance program quality*

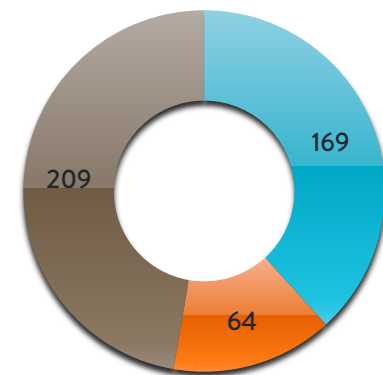
Categories of focus:

- Learning Environment
- Workforce & Professional Development
- Leadership, Management & Administration

*Denver Preschool Program & Colorado Shines Quality Improvement Funds

Our impact on quality

62% of licensed programs earned a Level 2 or higher Colorado Shines rating*



■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Levels 3-5

*Some Level 1 licensed programs have chosen not to engage in the Colorado Shines quality rating process

Quality Initiatives program highlights

Our quality coaches and business services staff quickly pivoted to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in April and focused on supporting providers with health and safety practices and maintaining their businesses.

Created and delivered a webinar for DPP providers on how to project funding based on child attendance



Designed a decision-making framework tool (with LAUNCH Together Southwest Denver) for providers



Developed a health & safety checklist for parents returning children to child care



Offered expertise in two major national news outlets, including Vox Media and NPR



PPE curbside pick-up and delivery

Providers that stayed open to support essential service workers in the early stages of the pandemic were given a boost with free Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, coordinated and distributed by the Council in partnership with with Office of Early Childhood and Mile High United Way.

153 emergency kits were distributed to **142** child care programs.

The kits included soap, bleach, paper towels, toilet paper, gloves, hand sanitizer, thermometers, masks, spray bottles, and extra pens for sanitary sign in and sign out stations.

In the field: Coaches are seeing great interest from teachers and directors in social-emotional coaching and reflective supervision.

Behind the scenes: The coaches engaged in team-building with the support of the Rocky Mountain Employers Council. All Early Childhood Quality Coaches are now certified for ECERS-R and ITERS-R.

Quality Navigators are now required to have their Colorado Coaching Credential, which is aligned to the Colorado Competencies for Early Childhood Coaches. This credential recognizes coaches who have the foundational skills and continuous training necessary for effective coaching. Programs can be confident that the Quality Navigator supporting them has the knowledge, training, and experience to successfully guide them through various quality improvement initiatives.



Career Pathways

Career Pathways takes a holistic approach to professional development, meeting each professional where they are and connecting them to career advice and resources to deepen their knowledge and strengthen their teaching practices no matter where they are on their early childhood career path.

Denver's Early Childhood Career Support Program

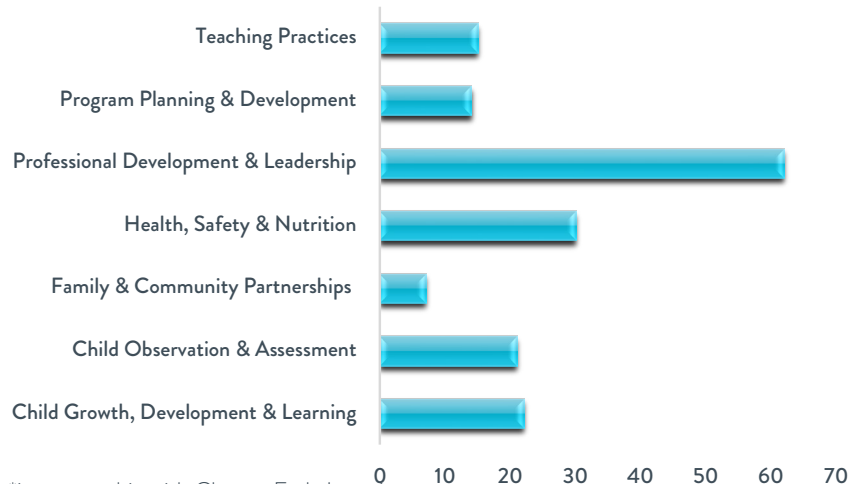
This program is a model for systemic, long-term sustainability for recruitment, retention and livable wages for the early childhood workforce. In year two of our program, we recruited a diverse cohort of teachers, offering tuition support and career navigation services that supported a variety of pathways to earn an Early Childhood Teacher qualification (ECT).

As of March 2020, five ECT certificates were awarded to teachers through our 2019-2020 program, but this initiative was not immune to the COVID-19 crisis. Our participants shifted coursework with the Community College of Denver to an online format, however the job-embedded components of observations, coaching, mentoring, and reflective supervision were negatively impacted.

Participants navigated difficult decisions about their chosen career paths as front line, essential workers and program attrition resulted. Prior to the pandemic, we anticipated nine participants earning their ECT by spring 2020 and another seven to be on track to complete milestones by the end of summer 2020.

Learnings from our two years of funding and partnership with Early Milestones Colorado, particularly around equitable entry and growth in the profession, have been elevated to key decision makers and continue to inform the Council's strategic work and funding priorities.

Training hours* by workforce competency domain



*in partnership with Clayton Early Learning



613 unique individuals

participated in



365 hours of training*



140 hours of training were delivered in Spanish

*in partnership with Clayton Early Learning

SEED

Denver's Early Learning WARM Line was launched as a pandemic response strategy. In partnership with the Mental Health Center of Denver and generously funded by The Colorado Health Foundation, the WARM Line is aligned to the Social Emotional Early Development (SEED) Initiative's goals to strengthen social emotional early childhood practices and early educator well-being.

The WARM Line creates a safe space to call with questions and concerns about young children's behavior and development. Supported by a team of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants, child care providers can be connected to resources and information for handling children's challenging behavior and managing their own emotions.

Career Pathways, cont.

Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference



"It was like stopping a freight train, unloading its contents, reloading them onto a rocket ship and delivering the goods - all within 48 hours!"

2,041 hours of training clock hours delivered 

472 early childhood professionals participated 

33 virtual sessions presented 

4.6/5 average session rating 

The 2020 Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference (RMECC) was scheduled to take place March 13 & 14, exactly at the time when the COVID-19 pandemic was forcing large events across the nation to cancel.

After much deliberation and discussion with government, health, and community leaders, and hearing concerns from many of our attendees, we made the difficult decision to cancel the conference only 48 hours before the event was scheduled to begin.

Within those 48 hours, conference and Council staff and presenters assembled 15 live virtual sessions to provide attendees an option to participate in sessions and still get professional development credit. Two weeks later, another round of 18 virtual sessions was made available.

We are grateful for the support of our sponsors, presenting partners, and exhibitors, who helped us pull together resources and pivot to a virtual format in a very short amount of time!

Systems Building

Early childhood systems building includes efforts around increasing availability, quality, and accessibility of services for children and families and increasing the capacity of early learning providers. The Council works with community partners to align policies and create efficient, accessible, culturally responsive early childhood services.

2020 forced us to become nimble and innovative in our approach to supporting providers during the pandemic. As we've all navigated how to work in this new landscape, our early childhood quality coaching, business support, and communications teams have continued to be a bedrock of support for providers, helping them stay abreast of new and changing health and safety regulations, emergency relief funding opportunities, mental health resources, and business-saving strategies.

Activities ranged from providing virtual trainings on targeted topics (health & safety, budgeting and operational decision-making), PPE supply drives, creating a COVID-19 resource library on our website, and ramping up frequency in general communications.

Child Health & Well-being: LAUNCH Together Southwest Denver set for a strong finish

The Council is set to complete the LAUNCH Together Southwest Denver grant in 2020, a collaboration of Denver-based non-profit, community-based, and governmental organizations working to enhance social-emotional development in children aged birth to eight within Southwest Denver neighborhoods.

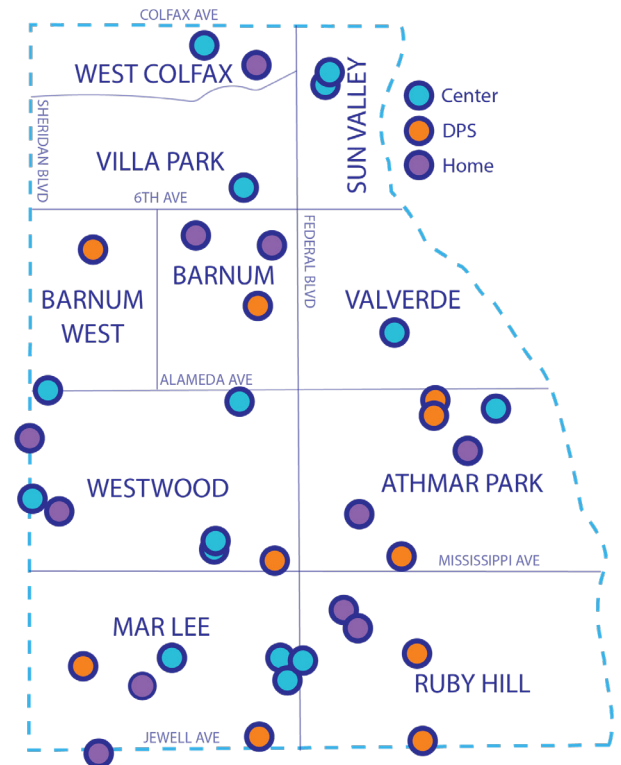
Hundreds of child care providers, health care providers, and parents completed training on social and emotional well-being and behavioral health



Mental health consultants, clinicians and ECE quality coaches were deployed on-site in child care settings to address challenging behaviors



500 kits of learning materials were distributed families after child care providers closed in-person services due to the pandemic

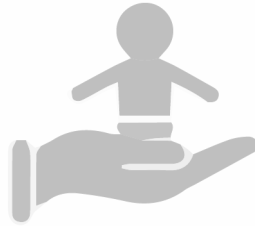


Systems Building, cont.

Colorado Emergency Child Care Collaborative

In the spring of 2020, we collaborated with child care providers, advocacy groups, school districts, and foundations along with Gary Community Investments and the Colorado Department of Human Services, to establish a system of emergency child care for essential workers.

Our role was to distribute surveys to provide data on which centers were open, connect child care providers with services and parents to child care.



2020 Census

We served as a local outreach and education hub to support census 2020 work, engaging the community by sharing information from the United States Census Bureau and Colorado's Together We Count. Pairing the data of children under age five with historically undercounted neighborhoods, we chose child care programs in targeted geographical areas for outreach.

Efforts included holding face-to-face trainings and

The logo for the United States Census 2020, featuring the text "United States® Census 2020" in white on a teal background.

information sessions before the pandemic hit and providing promotional materials in PPE supply distribution kits once we were unable to meet in person.

From the Data Desks

During Fiscal year 2019-20, Denver's Early Childhood Council continued to administer two versions of ecConnect, each meeting a unique purpose and serving slightly different audiences: "New" ecConnect is used for training registration, payment, and tracking for directors and teachers in Denver county to access professional development opportunities.

ecConnect Classic is used by all 34 Councils across the state of Colorado to award and track quality improvement activities with child care providers in their counties. Services available to providers in each county could include purchasing learning materials, coaching services, and scholarships for ECE coursework or other professional development.

New this year was the creation of a quarterly Sugar CRM database/ecConnect newsletter designed for users to stay up to date on changes to the system, hot tips for common issues, and the latest help desk resources.



Quarterly Sugar/ecConnect
e-newsletter

23 help desk articles updated



16 new articles created

We support a diverse user base in utilizing these systems.

Denver's Early Childhood Council resolved a total of **628** help desk tickets (100%), with an average resolution time of **3** hours (down **39%** from last year)!

Financials and Governance

Transparency, accountability and good governance are key to maintaining a thriving organization. To view our original 1023 501(c)(3) tax exemption application, full audited financial statements and past 990s, please visit denverearlychildhood.org/about/governance.

The Council is compliant with the Early Childhood Council Rules #16-10-27-1 (ECC Rules) to qualify as an Early Childhood Council (ECC) under HB 07-1062 and to remain eligible to receive ECC designated funding from the Colorado Department of Human Services.

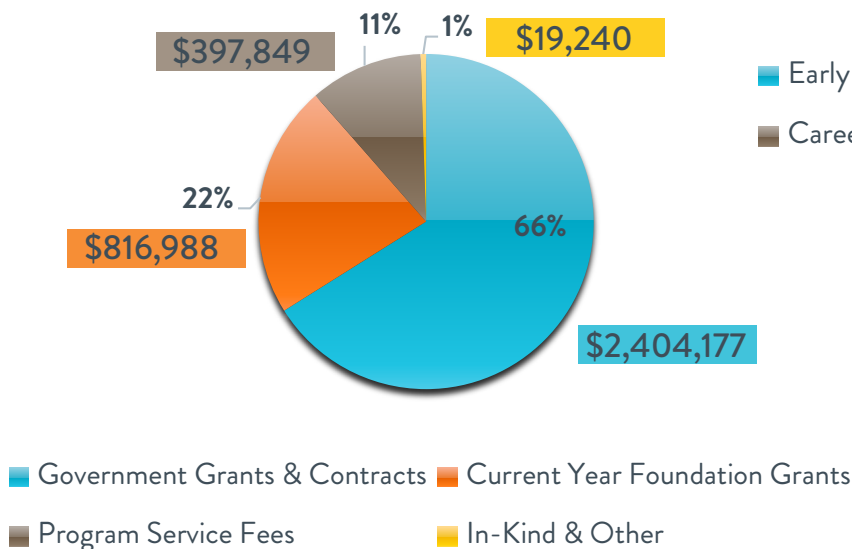
As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Denver's Early Childhood Council Governing Board of Directors established an Early Childhood Council Rules Oversight Council in 2017. The ECC Oversight Council assumes responsibility as the voting body with governing authority over all the duties enumerated in the ECC Rules as determined by the Board in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

2019-2020 Financial Overview

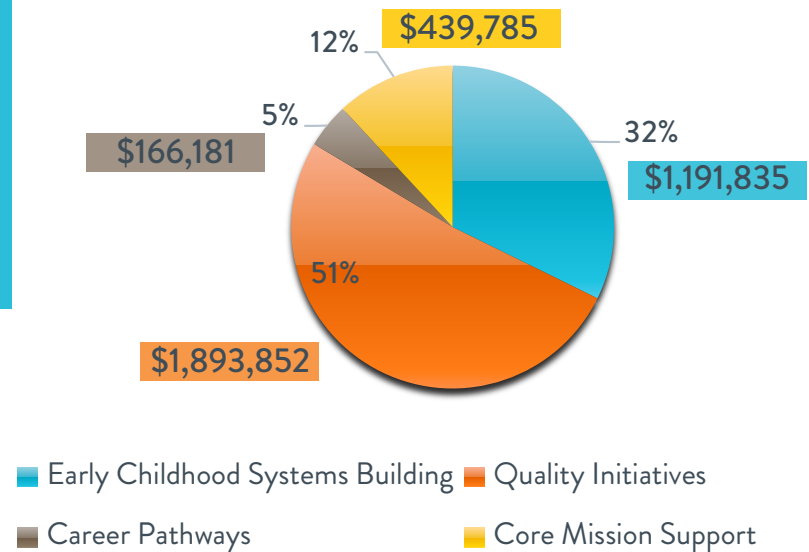
Total revenue available for use: \$3.64 million

Total current year expenses: \$3.69 million

Total Revenue by Type



Expenses by Major Program Area



Denver's Early Childhood Council is a qualifying agency for the Colorado Child Care Contribution tax credit.

Taxpayers making a monetary contribution to a qualifying agency that promotes child care in Colorado may claim an income tax credit of 50% of the total contribution, in addition to standard charitable deductions.

Staff July 2019 – June 2020

Leadership

Emily Bustos – Chief Executive Officer

Megan Bock - Chief Program Officer

Liz Isaacson – Chief Financial Officer

Nicole Riehl - Chief Operating Officer

Operations

Heidi Ganser Lang – Director of Major Events

Jodi Rosen – Human Resources Manager

Margaret Scruggs – Senior Staff Accountant

Hossay Shareefy – Operations Coordinator

Systems Building

Tracie Corner – Quality Data Solutions Manager

Erin Gager – Director of Data Systems

Cami Harris – Senior Communications Manager

Lilith Huff-Muñoz – Quality Initiatives Data Manager

Monica Marshall – Communications & Data Liaison

Quality Initiatives

Chinazo Dumas – Quality Navigator

Dora Esparza – Business Services Manager

Grisel Garcia – Quality Navigator

Jennifer Garcia – Early Childhood Quality Coach

Marianne Hodge – Quality Navigator

Monica Ibarra – Program Manager

Luisa Lemus – Lead Early Childhood Quality Coach

Ceilia Ramirez - Early Childhood Quality Coach

Maureen Reid – Director of Quality Initiatives

Jill Rocha – Early Childhood Quality Coach

Angeles Ross - Community Engagement Specialist

Trish Stanton - Early Childhood Quality Coach

Karen Thiel – Lead Quality Navigator

Elizabeth Williams – Early Childhood Quality Coach

Career Pathways

Kelly Bowes – Director of Career Pathways

Susan Kay – Social Emotional Early Development (SEED) Specialist

Melissa Maldonado – Career Pathways Manager

Mariah Saucedo - Program Assistant

Melanie Soneson – Career Pathways Coordinator



Board of Directors | Oversight Council Members July 2019 – June 2020

Scott Burns – Director of District Partnerships, Learning Ally

Dawn Davenport, Ph.D. – Vice President of Child & Family Services, Mental Health Center of Denver

Charles Dukes – Education & Policy Director, City & County of Denver

Diana Gadison – Owner/President/Director, Early Success Academy

Lisa Grant – Executive Director & Founder, Early Childhood by Design

Gerie Grimes - President & CEO, Hope Center

Maria Hannon – Senior Director of Human Resources, Colorado Health Foundation

Pamela Harris, Ph.D. - President & CEO, Mile High Early Learning Centers

Malinda E. Jones, Ed.D. - Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, MSU Denver

Jennifer Koch – Director of Integrated Behavioral Health for School-Based Services, Denver Health

Susan Kotarba - Director of Neighborhood Services, Denver Public Library

Jennifer Laughlin, CPA, CGMA - Chief Financial Officer, Altia

Casey Meyers – Consultant, Littleton Public Schools

Heather Ramey – Physical Therapist, DPT, First Steps Pediatric Therapy

Michael Rovaris, PLAY Program Manager, Mental Health Center of Denver

Kathryn Santoro - Vice President, Assistant General Counsel, Janus Capital Group

Sharon Triolo-Moloney – Director, P-3 Alignment (Retired), CO Department of Ed

Jane Walsh – Early Education Coordinator, Denver Public Schools



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With Gratitude

Denver's Early Childhood Council appreciates the support of the following contributors during the 2019-2020 year:

Foundation, Corporate & Governmental Grantors and Contributors:

AmazonSmile Foundation
Autism Community Store
Buell Foundation
Colorado COVID Relief Fund
Colorado Department of Higher Education
Colorado Department of Human Services
Colorado Health Foundation
Community First Foundation
CSSP - Center for the Study of Social Policy
Denver Preschool Program
Discount School Supply
Early Milestones Colorado
Kaplan Early Learning Company, Inc.
King Soopers Charity - Kroger
Lakeshore Learning
Liberty Mutual Group, Inc.
Mile High United Way
MyVillage
Rose Community Foundation
School Specialty - Childcraft
The Denver Foundation
The Women's Foundation of Colorado
Wonderschool

Individual Donors:

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Emily Bustos
Raylene Decatur
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Alison Friedman
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