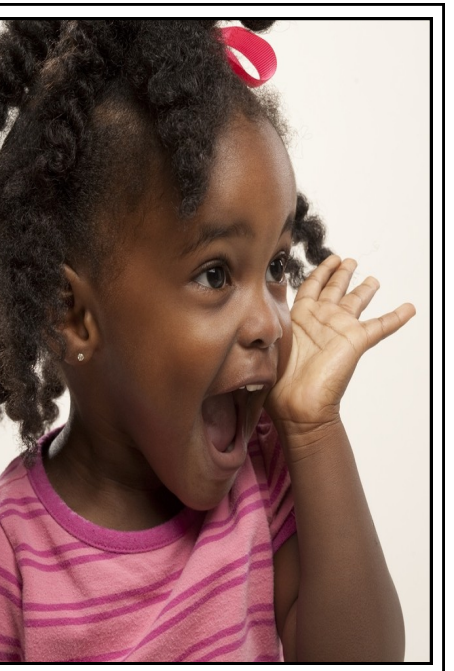
Attachment A

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP COMMISSION



2013 Annual Report

Presented To:

Governor Hickenlooper, and the Senate Education, Senate Health and Human Services, House Education, and House Public Health Care and Human Services Committees.

We are pleased to present the third annual report of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission. The ECLC was created through SB10-195 to promote the coordination of policies and procedures that *affect the health and well- being of Colorado children*. The Governor-appointed ECLC includes parents, business and philanthropic leaders, legislators, service providers, and representatives from education, health and other state and community stakeholders.

In less than three years since its formation, the Early Childhood Leadership Commission has made great strides to:

- **Close the Achievement Gap** through the promotion of high-quality early childhood services that help children get ready for school.
- **Support and Build the Workforce** through work on effective teaching practices and opportunities to learn and track career advancement.
- **Increase Efficiency, Increase Results** with the establishment of a new Office of Early Childhood and strategies to increase access to information for families.

We invite you to learn more about the Commission's activities in this annual report. We look forward to continued collaboration with families, providers, legislators and others across the state as we work to ensure that every Colorado child has a chance to be valued, healthy and thriving.

Joseph A. Garcia	**Anna-Jo Haynes**	**Pat Hamill**	**Reggie Bicha**
Lieutenant Governor	**Co-Chair ECLC**	**Co-Chair ECLC**	**Co-Chair ECLC**

Understanding Children in Colorado

This fall, more than 65,000 Colorado children started their first day of kindergarten. Their parents and teachers shared the same excitement and expectations for these kindergarteners – a hope that the first day of school marks the start down a path toward academic success and prosperous, productive lives. This vision is the American Dream. The more we learn about what it takes to achieve that dream, the more we understand the importance of a strong foundation in the earliest years of life. The Early Childhood Leadership Commission supports efforts to give Colorado children a solid start with caring adults who provide learning opportunities in every setting – homes, child care centers and schools.

Colorado Wins a $30 Million Grant for Young Children

This past December, Colorado was awarded a $29.9 million Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund grant. The grant will fund work to ensure more Colorado children, especially those most at-risk, are ready for school. The money, awarded to the new Office of Early Childhood, will help:

- Launch an improved Quality Rating and Improvement System for all licensed child care and early learning programs and offer incentives to increase the quality and effectiveness of programs.
- Support effective early learning professionals with education and training opportunities.

- Enable child-focused instruction and support the state kindergarten assessment.
- Strengthen coordination between the state and local delivery systems.
- Grant funds are reserved for local entities to support local needs.

Support of parents as their child's first teacher will be at the heart of the work: the grant will help educate and empower families so they can best promote the optimal development of their children.

The Early Childhood Leadership Commission took a major role in shaping the proposed work along with many, many public, private and foundation partners. The ECLC believes this grant is proof that Colorado is becoming a national leader in effectively helping young children and families so that children start school ready and reach third grade with a solid foundation.

Kindergarten readiness is a major milestone in a child's path to success, but in Colorado it's estimated that this year at least 16,000 children arrived in classrooms unprepared to keep pace with their peers. This places 16,000 Colorado children at a different starting line in the road to academic success. Recently, the Colorado legislature and the Hickenlooper-Garcia Administration have made third grade reading proficiency one of its top priorities. To meet that goal, we must support effective early childhood experiences.

The ECLC shares these priorities and has already focused efforts on smarter management, better quality, stronger workforce, and a deeper understanding of children, in order to help make that goal obtainable. The following are some of the successes that, along with many state partners, we're proud to have supported.

ECLC Helps Parents

The Early Childhood Universal Application will serve as a one-stop shop for parents accessing valuable information about desired supports and services. HB 10-1028 paved the way for the Early Childhood Universal Application; it charged a subcommittee with the job of creating and implementing a universal application to be used by families for programs related to early childhood care and education. Their recommendations include a user-friendly online system that can be used to determine eligibility across multiple early childhood programs and streamline the application process. The result? Better customer service and less confusion for families trying to seek services for their children.

Smarter Management

Last year the ECLC promoted the alignment and consolidation of state early childhood programs in order to enable more efficient services for families that need and want support. To create better alignment, the Governor recently established the Office of Early Childhood, which includes many major early childhood programs. Already, the Office of Early

Childhood is having a positive impact, including enhanced collaboration with the ECLC and an increased focus on child outcomes and family support services through the new federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funding. The ECLC will support legislation in the 2013 session to continue alignment efforts for early childhood programs and supports.

In addition, at the September 2012 meeting of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission, the Colorado Department of Human Services, Colorado Department of Education and the Lt. Governor's Office executed a Memorandum of Understanding that outlined a shared, seamless system of quality learning environments for the state's young children. These actions promote effective programs for children and families and a shared effort to ensure public dollars for young children have the most positive impact possible.

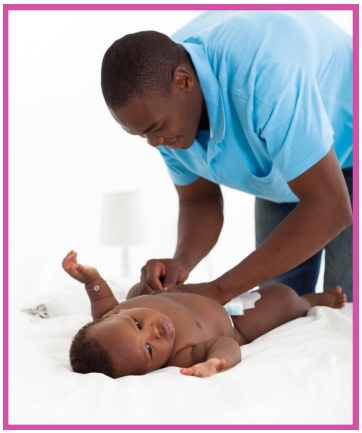
"promote effective programs for children and families … ensure public dollars for young children have the most positive impact"

Better Quality

Decades of research tell us that high quality early learning and care programs increase kindergarten readiness while low quality programs can actually hurt child development. With financial support from the ECLC, the Colorado Department of Human Services is currently evaluating a plan for the new Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for early care and learning programs that will be embedded into state licensing. Early Learning Challenge Grant dollars will support the implementation of the new

to quality that puts the effectiveness for children as the central focus.

Lastly, the state made significant strides in the piloting of data technology to enhance our efforts for continuous quality improvement across programs. The ECLC is proud to play a supportive role in these efforts, led by the Colorado Department of Education.



Stronger Workforce

The adults in a child's life – parents, grandparents, but also those in early learning and care settings - make a big difference in how each child develops. We know that a strong and well-educated early childhood workforce is a wise investment in a child's academic success. In the spring of 2012 the Colorado Commission on Higher Education reversed a ruling that prohibited colleges and universities from offering a bachelors degree in early childhood education. Today several institutions of higher education are creating bachelor degree programs in Early Childhood that will soon be open for enrollment. The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) funded the development of new workforce competencies – what teachers should know and be able to do in order to be most effective at their job. These competencies, developed under the direction of the P-3 Professional Development Task Force of the ECLC, will be incorporated into degree and credential programs as well as into ongoing professional development, for those teaching children from birth to 8 years old.

ECLC Helps Providers

We know that a stronger workforce is critical to children's future success. The Early Childhood Learning Management System (LMS) will help providers by creating a streamlined method for tracking and promoting the professional development of the early childhood workforce. A single point of access for information such as transcripts and training experiences will significantly reduce the administrative costs that burden early childhood centers. This online system will allow staff to spend less time on paperwork and more time focusing on providing high quality services to children. The LMS will also boost staff quality by providing streamlined communication about trainings, policies, and certifications for all early childhood professionals.

Deeper Understanding of Children

How do we know if children are ready for kindergarten or if they're developing on-pace before school? Common early learning and development guidelines for young children are just as important as common learning standards in K-12. The Departments of Education and Human Services, along with the ECLC have agreed to support recently completed Early Learning and Development Guidelines for children from birth to 8 years old. The development of these guidelines, which include comprehensive information spanning health and cognitive development, was funded by the ECLC. These guidelines are based on the most up-to-date information about child development and are linked to the Colorado Academic Standards, which include the entirety of the Common Core State Standards, for pre-school through 3rd grade, creating a seamless approach throughout the early years. Most importantly, these guidelines are for everyone who cares about young children.

Information on child development will be disseminated to parents, as well as to the early childhood workforce, including those working with children in preschool through 3rd grade.

We won't really know how prepared Colorado children are for kindergarten until we implement a holistic state-wide kindergarten readiness assessment. The good news is that a statewide assessment will be launched in 2013. This assessment was part of SB 08-212, Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), which established a road map for Colorado to achieve preschool to postsecondary alignment within its education system. A great deal of work has been completed in the past few years to help determine the appropriate approach to school readiness assessment for the state. In the past few months the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has conducted a series of 10 regional meetings across the state to discuss assessment issues in K-3, related to CAP4K and the Colorado READ Act. In addition, the School Readiness Assessment Subcommittee, formed in 2010, has had a series of meetings to review specific school readiness assessments. At their December 2012 meeting, the State Board of Education agreed to offer a menu of assessments for kindergarten. However, to date, only one assessment, Teaching Strategies GOLD, meets all the requirements. The Early Childhood Leadership Commission has been happy to provide financial support for a pilot of the assessment and will continue to help ensure that teachers and administrators are well supported as the kindergarten readiness assessment is implemented.

Statewide Interest. Policy Leadership.

Interest in the importance of early childhood development is growing across the state. This was recently evidenced throughout the TBD Colorado community-based feedback process. TBD Colorado engaged more than 2,000 Coloradans in an unprecedented effort to learn and provide input on some of the most important issues facing the state. Even in a state as diverse as ours, there are fundamental values that transcend geography, policy, party, race, ethnicity and income status. Of the five issues addressed by TBD – education, health, transportation, state budget, and state workforce - early childhood education rose to the top. The TBD Board of Directors recently released policy recommendations developed as a result of the these public meetings and the early childhood recommendations were as follows:

> "Of the five issues addressed by TDB… early childhood education rose to the top"

1. Legislation should be considered to expand the number of children in the Colorado Preschool Program so that all families with at-risk children have the opportunity to participate;
2. Legislation should be considered to increase the availability of full-day Kindergarten for those parents who want it.

These recommendations were reflected in the Governor's proposed 2013-2014 budget. The budget proposes:

- $208 million in new state dollars for K-12 education
- Approximately $20.9 million designated for early childhood to support expanded access to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.

This momentum was also apparent in last year's early literacy bus tour where, throughout the state, there were calls for increased early childhood supports to promote literacy. Last session the legislature, with strong bipartisan support, passed HB12-1238, the Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act. This act will help ensure that every child in Colorado has access to effective literacy support and that children with significant reading issues are identified as early as kindergarten. The bill also enables teachers to provide enhanced individualized reading interventions. The bill engages parents throughout the process, helping to ensure they are aware of their child's progress and are able to support interventions. The ECLC supports this work and will continue to help ensure these initiatives succeed.

Looking Ahead: ECLC Re-Authorization

The ECLC is thrilled with the many successes already achieved, but there is much more to be done.

Guided by the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* the Commission will continue to support a unified system across early learning, family support and parent education, and physical and social-emotional health. A strong, effective system includes local entities, private partners, and state agencies including the Colorado Departments of Public Health and Environment, Health Care Policy and Financing, Education, and Human Services.

By providing a forum for all critical stakeholders, including parents, we ensure multiple perspectives contribute to improving outcomes for young children.

The Commission will continue to support state-level efforts including advising the new Office of Early Childhood and supporting the early childhood recommendations of TBD Colorado.

Finally, the Commission will continue to place an emphasis on empowering families to be their child's first and most important teacher. Future work will include increased public communication and education around the importance of healthy child development, school readiness and support of local efforts targeted to specific community needs. And we'll be dedicated to ensuring public programs work best for the families that need and want them.

Our first step is to re-authorize the Early Childhood Leadership Commission, which is set to sunset in May. 2013 legislation is planned to re-authorize the Commission and ensure these goals are part of the ECLC's future mandate. Under this legislation, the Commission will continue to operate without dedicated state funding. We hope you join us in supporting this legislation so that we can continue to promote the best for young children and families throughout Colorado.

"By providing a forum for all critical stakeholders, including parents, we ensure multiple perspectives contribute to improving outcomes for young children."

ECLC Helps Policy Makers

The Colorado Early Investment Model, launched November 2012 by the ECLC, is a web-based free public tool that contains enrollment and cost figures for Colorado's early childhood programs. Combining state and federally funded programs in physical health, mental health, family support and early learning, the Investment Model allows users to build scenarios by changing enrollment and quality factors to produce changes in cost. Many programs contain research documenting a return on investment in terms of monies saved and monies returned to the economy. Results from the launch have demonstrated the connection between cost, quality and return on investment. For example, of those programs in the model with return research, the average return is $8.95 per dollar invested. To put that in perspective, under Colorado's current investment of $237 million in these programs, the total return to the state is $2.1 billion.

To visit the Colorado Early Investment Model go to:

www.coearlyinvestmentmodel.org.

Thank You to Our Partners

Augenblick, Palaich & Associates

Aurora Public Schools

BUILD Initiative

Boulder Day Nursery

Boulder Journey School

Chambers Family Fund

Child and Family Policy Center

Clayton Early Learning

Colorado Alliance for Quality School-Age Programs

Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children

Colorado Association for Family Child Care

Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health

Colorado Children's Campaign

Colorado Children's Trust Fund and Family Resource Centers

Colorado Community College System

Colorado Department of

Education

Colorado Department of Higher Education

Colorado Department of

Human Services

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing

Colorado Early Learning Partnership

Colorado Head Start Association

Colorado Health Foundation

Colorado Parent and Child Foundation

Colorado State University

Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition

Colorado Trust

Denver Health

Denver Preschool Program

Early Childhood and School Readiness Legislative Commission

Early Childhood Councils Leadership Alliance

Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado

Early Childhood Professional Development Team

Early Learning Ventures

Executives Partnering to Invest in Children

Family Leadership Training Institute

Family Flex

Foundation for Educational Excellence

Invest In Kids

Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation

Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Mile High Montessori

Mile High United Way

Office of Information Technology

Oldham Innovative Research

Piton Foundation

Pyramid Plus

Qualistar Colorado

Rebound Solutions, Inc

Red Rocks Community College

Rose Community Foundation

Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation

The Partnership for Families & Children

University of Colorado Denver

University of Denver

University of Northern Colorado

ZERO TO THREE

2012 Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Alicia Wager– Parent Representative

Anna-Jo Haynes—President Emeritus Mile High Montessori

Brad Busse— Co-Head U.S. Communications, Media & Entertainment, RBC Capitol

Charlie Forester—President and CEO, Collegiate Peaks Bank

Charlotte Brantley—President and CEO, Clayton Early Learning

Chris Watney—President and CEO, Colorado Children's Campaign

Cynthia Lindquist—Chair of Early Education, Metro State University

Dave Ferrill—Global Business Development Field Liaison, Office of Economic Development and International Trade

David Suppes—COO, Denver Public Schools

Diane Price—President and CEO, Early Connections Learning Center

Elsa Holguin—Senior Program Officer, Rose Community Foundation

Fernando Martinez—President and CEO, San Luis Valley Community Mental Health Center

Fernando Pineda-Reyes—Founder and CEO, CREA Results

Gina Robinson—Program Administrator, Department of Health Care Policy & Finance

Greg Anton—Partner, Anton, Collins, Mitchell LLP

Gregory Anderson—Dean of Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver

Jim Lynn— Agency Services Director, Office of Information Technology

Joel Jones—Durango Chamber of Commerce

Karen Trierweiler— Center for Healthy Families and Communities Director, Department of Public Health and Environment

Kim Poast—Associate Deputy Director, Department of Higher Education

Larry Curry—President and CEO, The Curry Center

Larry Wolk—CEO, Colorado Regional Health Information Organization

Mark Spiecker—CEO, Sharklet Technologies Inc.

Melissa Colsman—Office of Teaching and Learning Director, Department of Education

Pat Hamill—Chairman and CEO, Oakwood Homes

Reggie Bicha—Executive Director, Department of Human Services

Representative James Kerr—Colorado State Legislature

Representative Judy Solano—Colorado State Legislature

Senator Linda Newell—Colorado State Legislature

Senator Nancy Spence—Colorado State Legislature

Sheila Groneman—Head Start State Collaboration and Systems Coordination Director, Office of the Lt. Governor

Sherry Price—Children and Family Services Director, Mesa Developmental Services

Steve Romero—Director, Morgan County Department of Human Services

Suzanne Helburn—Professor Emeritus, University of Colorado

For Questions relating to the Annual Report please contact Colin Tackett:

colin.tackett@state.co.us

ECLC

Early Childhood Leadership Commission