

**Early Childhood Leadership Commission**  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, 8 December 2010  
8:00am-3:00pm  
St. Cajetan's- Auraria Campus, Denver, CO

*Commissioners Present:*

Commission Chairs- Pat Hamill, Anna Jo Haynes  
Commissioners- Charlotte Brantley, Brad Busse, Micheline Casey, Larry Curry, Charlie Forster, Suzie Helburn, Elsa Holguin, Joel Jones (via phone), George Kennedy, Representative Jim Kerr, Cynthia Lindquist, Don Marostica, Fernando Martinez, Fernando Pineda-Reyes, Senator Linda Newell, Kim Poast, Diane Price, Sherry Price (via phone), Gina Robinson, Diane Sirko, Senator Nancy Spence, David Suppes, Valencia "Faye" Tate, Karen Trierweiler, Chris Watney

*Commissioners Excused:*

Gregory Anderson, Greg Anton, Stacy Buchanan, Jose Mondragon, Steve Romero, Representative Judy Solano, Larry Wolk

*Staff Present:*

Yee-Ann Cho, Jodi Hardin, Andrew Freedman, Jennifer Stedron, Molly Yost

I. ***Welcome and Call to Order (Anna Jo Haynes, Commission Co-Chair)***

Anna Jo Haynes called the meeting to order and acknowledged the loss of Commission Co-Chair, Elizabeth Groginsky. A new appointment will be made once the Hickenlooper-Garcia Administration takes office. In addition, Sherry Price was named interim co-chair to replace Elizabeth Groginsky on the Data, Needs Assessment and Insights Committee until Karen Trierweiler can assume the role in the Spring of 2011. Parent representative, Gretchen Holland, has also resigned due to other obligations.

ECLC Executive Director, Jennifer Stedron and ECLC Co-Chair, Anna Jo Haynes presented the Commission's Year One Budget for the budget period June 1, 2010 – May 31, 2011.

**COMMISSION VOTE: The Commission moved, seconded and unanimously endorsed the Year One Budget.**

The minutes from the September 22, 2010 ECLC Meeting were reviewed by the Commissioners.

**COMMISSION VOTE: The Commission moved, seconded and unanimously approved the September 22, 2010 Early Childhood Commission Meeting Minutes.**

II. ***Chair Report (Pat Hamill, Commission Co-Chair)***

Pat Hamill provided a meeting overview and reviewed meeting objectives including:

- Reflection on remarks by Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien
- Early Childhood Advisory Council Recommendations to the ECLC, as required by statute
- Discussion and approval of individual Committee Reports
- Presentation of Colorado's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), the EPIC Employer toolkit and the 2010 Colorado Children's Campaign Budget, in order to better facilitate the efforts of the ECLC.

- Transition update from Andrew Freedman, Chief of Staff to Lt. Governor-elect, Joe Garcia
- January ECLC report to the Governor, House and Senate Health and Human Services and Education Committees Joint Session
- Issues of governance to address in 2011
- Review of the ECLC Legislative Action Process
- Session forecast and potential legislation updates

### III. ***Remarks (Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien)***

Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien thanked co-chairs, Anna Jo Haynes and Pat Hamill; seated legislators Senator Newell, Senator Spence, Representative Solano, Representative Jim Kerr; and all Commissioners. The Lt. Governor reflected on the accomplishments of the Ritter-O'Brien Administration and the responsibilities of the Commission. She highlighted the comprehensive and robust policy agenda to address gaps in achievement and disparities in outcomes during this challenging economy. Achievements are evident in increased funding for evidence-based home visiting, state-funded Pre-K Programs and high-quality child care. The Lt. Governor also acknowledged the deficits Colorado is facing including the alarming number of at-risk children in the state, gaps in services for at-risk youth, gaps in outcomes and the lack of a state-wide universal readiness assessment.

Lt. Governor O'Brien charged the ECLC with implementing answers to address these urgent problems. Her recommendations included establishing an effective governance structure that is coordinated and dedicated to improving outcomes for children, developing a coherent system that is aligned through the third grade based on the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* and addressing factors that contribute to low-performing schools and students including chronic absence and summer learning loss.

The Commission thanked the Lt. Governor for her efforts to improve the quality of education and life for children Colorado children.

### IV. ***ECCAT Recommendations (Megan Wilson and Sherri Valdez, ECCAT Co-Chairs)***

Megan Wilson and Sherri Valdez introduced themselves along with incoming Chair, Cindy Bernal. The mission and vision of the Early Childhood Councils Advisory Team was shared with the Commission. The mission statement provides that the ECCAT advises the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Early Childhood Leadership Commission on the creation, support and improvement of policies and resources affecting the Early Childhood Councils in their capacity to function effectively and efficiently on behalf of all young children and their families in Colorado. The PowerPoint presentation gave an overview of the system of local councils, the legislation under which ECCAT was created and four recommendations. They include:

- Enhance the state-wide infrastructure for early childhood systems building
- Develop and implement a state-wide multi-media communications and marketing plan
- Develop an integrated data collection system across four domains (Early Learning, Family Support, Health and Mental Health)
- Create a step in the State Plan submission process to provide opportunity for ECLC and ECCAT to systematically review plans across departments as they pertain to early childhood systems building.

Pat Hamill opened the floor for discussion. Issues of accountability, restructuring and administrative budgets were discussed. Several questions arose surrounding these various issues and many Commissioners expressed the need for more clearly defined talking points and quantifiable data supporting the four ECCAT recommendations.

**COMMISSION VOTE: The Commission moved and seconded to delay the endorsement of the Early Childhood Councils Advisory Team (ECCAT) to the next Early Childhood Leadership Commission Meeting.**

V. *Data, Needs Assessment and Insights Committee Report (Suzie Helburn and Sherri Price, Committee Co- Chair and Interim Co-chair)*

Suzie Helburn outlined the Data, Needs Assessment and Insights Committee Report and action items which fall under two spheres: Interagency Data Systems and Statewide Needs Assessment. The specific action items included:

- Review Mission, Purpose and Driving Questions that will guide the Interagency Data work
- Review Mission and Purpose for the Statewide Needs Assessment
- Review Framework Support and Services and Public document
- Update on the Universal Application Sub-Committee

A document titled, “Colorado’s Early Childhood Data Systems: Mission, Purpose and Driving Questions” was distributed to the Commissioners for review. It stated that the mission of the early childhood data system is to coordinate, align and integrate public and private data sources to help identify and meet the needs of Colorado’s children and communicate their status and progress. Micheline Casey of the Governor’s Office of Information and Technology reported that collection from various agencies has begun and will partner with the ECLC to prioritize data sets that will be most beneficial and relevant to achieving the goal to integrate and develop data systems that encompass the supports and services defined by *Colorado’s Early Childhood Framework*.

Next, a document titled, “Colorado’s Early Childhood Needs Assessment: Mission and Purpose” was distributed for the Commissioners to review. The mission is to “identify and communicate community information on the need, quality and availability of public supports and services that help meet the needs of Colorado’s most at-risk children. The Data, Needs Assessment and Insight Committee will continue to work on formulating specific recommendations for the January 2011 Joint Session Report to the Governor.

**COMMISSION ACTION: Discuss the Data System and Needs Assessment Scope and Next Steps.**

VI. *Program Quality , Coordination and Alignment Committee Report (Anna Jo Haynes and Chris Watney, Committee Co-Chairs)*

Commissioners were given the Program Quality, Coordination and Alignment Committee Report for review. The following action items were discussed:

- Discuss the P-3 Professional Development Advisory Group and Next Steps
- Discuss Colorado’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Redesign effort
- Move that the Commission endorse the ECLC Position Statement

The Commission reviewed a list of approved stakeholders who will be members of the P-3 Professional Development Advisory Group. Jennifer Stedron explained that this group will be responsible for identifying budget needs and that the ECLC will be able to provide partial funding.

**COMMISSION ACTION: Discuss the Professional Development Sub-Committee and Year 1 Plan of Action**

Rosemarie Allen (Colorado's Quality Rating Improvement System) shared an overview of QRIS's vision, goal and guiding values. This included the objective to make QRIS available and affordable for all early learning and school-age programs; to improve the quality of learning and school-age programs; to change Child Care Licensing regulations to reflect higher quality standards; and to develop a rated license in Colorado. The presentation also included the strategic actions, the QRIS Planning Process and Governance Infrastructure and next steps needed in order to achieve this set of goals. Rosemarie and the QRIS team are open to input and encouraged the Commissioners and Stakeholders to submit questions and suggestions via [QRIS.Feedback@state.co.us](mailto:QRIS.Feedback@state.co.us).

Several Commissioners raised questions as to how quality is defined. It was resolved that the Program Quality Committee will stay engaged in this discussion with QRIS and report the final recommendations to the full Commission when ready.

Jennifer Stedron reviewed the draft of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission Position Statement on Assessment included in the meeting materials. The document is intended to be submitted to the Colorado State Department of Education for the purpose of developing assessment attributes across the P-20 pipeline.

**VII. *Finance and Economic Development Committee Report (Brad Busse and Elsa Holguin, Committee Co-Chairs)***

Jennifer Stedron introduced the new Executive Director of EPIC, Mary Atchison. Mary distributed information about the tooling developed for businesses by EPIC. The web-based employer toolkit was unveiled at the most recent EPIC luncheon which was attended by over two hundred people. As explained in Mary Atchison's presentation, EPIC is a coalition of business leaders, non-profits focused on improving child care, health and parent education to improve the lives of young children. Mary demonstrated the EPIC website and the various pages/links that can be utilized to inform and share information to businesses about why and how employers benefit children and employees.

Next, Robin Baker of the Colorado Children's Campaign presented a preview of the Colorado Children's Budget for 2010. The presentation gave an overview of all children's programs highlighted investment trends. In sum, money invested in children's programs and services declined steadily since 2000 and depended on three factors: state constitutional protections, dedicated cash fund source and the ability to leverage additional dollars. Rules and regulations differ by level of government and by service making it difficult to align programs and maximize benefits for children. Two recessions and unique state fiscal policies left lawmakers with tough choices and few options.

Jennifer Stedron reviewed the Finance and Economic Development Committee Report and action items which include:

- Discuss “Mapping and Cost Model Projects, Purpose and Policy Questions” summary document
- Discuss Early Childhood Colorado Framework Supports, Services and Public Funding Streams” document
- Discuss cost model scope of work and progress on development
- Discuss the mapping scope of work and progress on the mapping project

**COMMISSION VOTE: The Commission moved, seconded and unanimously approved to spend the additional \$80,000 investment for the development of cost model.**

VIII. *Lunch Break*

IX. *ECLC Activities for 2011 (Jennifer Stedron, Executive Director)*

Jennifer Stedron introduced Andrew Freedman, the Chief of Staff to the Lt. Governor-elect, Joe Garcia. Andrew is a recent Harvard Law graduate and was heavily recruited by this Administration. Jennifer conveyed the Commission’s eagerness to work closely with Andrew and Joe Garcia to improve the quality of education and life for Colorado’s children. Andrew continued to thank Jennifer and the Commission and reported that Joe Garcia could not attend this meeting due to a scheduling conflict. Joe’s mother was an academic who pushed him to take advantage of educational opportunities and will continue to make education a top priority in this Administration.

Jennifer Stedron updated the Commission on the status of the January Report to the Governor and the Health and Human Services Committee and the Education Committee of the House and Senate. The tentative date for this Joint Session is January 21, 2011. The goal of this Report is to: 1) communicate the need for this work and focus on desired outcomes for the actual children and families; 2) reflect some important messages based on state context and the new administration; 3) set the tone for strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders, focus on child and family results and strong stewardship of current resources; and 4) reiterate the importance of the work in the coming year with particular emphasis on governance.

Jennifer Stedron then outlined the Early Childhood Leadership Commission Legislation Procedures and Processes. She shared information regarding criteria for legislation consideration and support, processes prior to this legislative session (including externally and internally generated legislation) and the ECLC processes during this legislative session.

X. *Session Forecast and Upcoming Legislation (Representative Jim Kerr, Senators Linda Newell and Nancy Spence; Reilly Pharo, Colorado Children’s Campaign; Kippi Clausen, Mile High United Way)*

Senator Linda Newell began by expressing the need to balance the budget and instill a sense of fiscal responsibility in the upcoming legislative session. She updated the Commission on the agenda of the Interim Committee and acknowledged that split chambers will create deeper discussions and legislation that is vetted from the middle. Representative Jim Kerr reiterated that the top priority for this legislative session is to balance the budget. The high unemployment rate and increased number of foreclosures mirrors what is happening to the nation as a whole and in turn, there is less money designated to education. He is eager to work with his democratic counterparts as well as the Executive Branch in order to balance the budget. Senator Newell concurred with Representative Kerr’s statement and added that every crisis brings an opportunity for innovation and we must approach this challenge with the idea that kids come first. There are

pieces of low-cost legislation centered around children that address a children's bill of rights, truancy and absenteeism and the loophole in adoption for profit.

Next, Reilly Pharo, the Public Affairs Director for the Colorado Children's Campaign communicated how Early Childhood issues fall into different silos. It would be beneficial to see upcoming legislation that focused on streamlining these efforts and communication. There are several state plans to be reviewed by the bi-partisan Childhood Caucus. She expressed the want for the ECLC to be involved in reviewing state plans and processes.

Following Reilly Pharo's comments, Kippi Clausen from the Mile High United Way Department of Policy and Population Strategies addressed the Child Care Contribution Credit and how it will impact the childcare workforce and the quality of care provided. Kippi Clausen educated the Commission on the current funding trigger and how that changes regarding the trigger could financially impact Early Childhood efforts.

**COMMISSION VOTE: The Commission moved to be actively involved in the process regarding Child Care Contribution Credit. There were four abstentions: Karen Trieweler, George Kennedy, Gina Robinson and Representative Jim Kerr.**

XI. *Public Comments (Pat Hamill, Co-Chair)*

No public comments.

XII. *Announcement and Adjournment (Anna Jo Haynes, Co-Chair)*

Anna Jo encouraged all Commissioners to review the letter written by James J. Heckman of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Reform. Meeting dates for 2011 and 2012 were distributed to Commissioners.