

Final
STAFF SUMMARY OF MEETING

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS

Date: 08/17/2015

ATTENDANCE

Time: **01:05 PM to 03:43 PM**

Marble X

Merrifield *

Place: SCR 356

Singer X

Wilson X

This Meeting was called to order by
Senator Martinez Humenik

Pettersen X

Martinez Humenik X

This Report was prepared by
Lisa Gezelter

X = Present, E = Excused, A = Absent, * = Present after roll call

Bills Addressed:	Action Taken:
Integration from Preschool to Kindergarten	Witness Testimony and/or Committee Discussion Only
Child Welfare and Mental Health	Witness Testimony and/or Committee Discussion Only
Early Childhood Colorado Framework	Witness Testimony and/or Committee Discussion Only
Public Comment	Witness Testimony and/or Committee Discussion Only

01:05 PM -- Integration from Preschool to Kindergarten

Senator Martinez Humenik, chair, welcomed the committee and audience. She introduced the panelists speaking about the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

Superintendent Chris Gdowski, representing Adams 12 Five Star Schools, introduced himself and spoke about the diversity of his school district and the socioeconomic status of people in his community. He discussed the challenge of serving preschool kids and mentioned that wealthy families can access preschool through the private sector, disabled children can access public preschools free of charge, and very poor children have access to Headstart programs. He spoke about the challenge of serving children that do not fall into any of those groups. He described his district's lack of space for additional classrooms. He explained that one-third of kids move within district from preschool into kindergarten, while two-thirds of kindergarteners have not been in district preschools and have widely varying preschool experiences. He spoke about the challenges of addressing this problem. Superintendent Gdowski described overcrowded schools, such as one elementary school that currently houses 800 students, but was only designed to hold 600. He told the commission that his district lacks both space to house preschool students and sufficient operating dollars. He described his district's early childhood centers, housing 10 to 12 preschool classrooms, as an alternative to housing preschool classrooms in elementary schools. He said the centers make transitions into kindergarten more difficult because kids have to change buildings. He described the compromise his district is making now by pushing young children into early childhood centers as opposed to having them attend preschool in the elementary school where they will eventually go.

Lisa Jansen Thompson, Director of the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County, described the nature of Colorado's 31 early childhood councils. She discussed her council's work with five major school districts in Adams County. She explained the high mobility rate in Adams County and mentioned that 76 percent of children never have any formal schooling or childcare before they enter kindergarten. She described her job as trying to pull the community together to get young children ready for school. Ms Jansen Thompson explained that successful transitions happen when children have the cognitive and social skills to succeed in school, no matter what their prior experiences were. She described how her organization brought together the community to talk about what school readiness looks like, how to help kids transition into kindergarten successfully, and what caregivers and teachers need to know. She told the commission that her organization published a kindergarten transition guide for caregivers. Ms. Jansen Thompson said that the biggest struggle in Adams County is that so many children never attend any preschool or formal program before enrolling in kindergarten.

Superintendent Elizabeth Fagen, representing Douglas County Schools, spoke about the challenges of finding space for preschool classrooms. She told the commission that in 2010, there were 48 preschool sites in her district while this year, there are 70. She described her district's need, every year, to add sites for preschool classrooms and told the commission there is a tug of war for classrooms in schools now. Superintendent Fagen described her efforts to put preschool classrooms in high schools so high school students can learn about early childhood education. She described her district as running out of space, and told the commission that her district is discussing discontinuing preschool classes for lack of space. She spoke about her district's focus on preschool classrooms that focus on childfind-qualifying students along with an equal number of tuition-paying students. She mentioned that many students in Douglas County do not attend preschool at all because parents prefer to keep kids at home. She explained that kindergarten teachers in Douglas County have strong orientation programs to identify the unique needs of all students and prepare kids for classes. Superintendent Fagen discussed her district's efforts to place strong special education teams and mental health support staff in kindergarten classrooms wherever necessary. She told the commission that early childhood is not part of her district's core function, and that while the district needs space for its K-12 program, it is hard to allocate space to preschool classrooms.

Erica Branscum, Director of Learning Services for Mapleton Public Schools, described her background in early childhood education. She told the commission that 464 preschool students in her district are funded through the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) and special education funding. She explained that in her district, preschool classes meet five days per week not four, as in many other districts, and that most classes meet for half day, while some meet for a full day. She told the commission her district does have tuition-paying preschool students as well, and that all kindergarten classrooms are full day because Mapleton has invested in full-day kindergarten. She said that 75 percent of the district's students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, and that in order to get its students ready for 3rd grade, the district offers full day kindergarten for all students. She expressed her agreement with previous speakers who shared concerns regarding lack of space and operational funding for additional preschool classrooms. Ms. Branscum told the commission that all preschool teachers in her district are certified and have an early childhood degree, and the district does not hire classified staff to teach preschool as it had previously. She expressed concern with issues surrounding data and assessments and described her district's use of Teaching Strategies Gold in preschool and kindergarten classrooms. She said that funding is needed for training staff, such as kindergarten teachers having to implement the assessment. She relayed her district's challenges with preschool teachers implementing assessments in a half-day program, and described a gap between K-12 and preschool in terms of data and reporting. She told the commission how her district holds kindergarten fairs for parents to learn about their choices for kindergarten enrollment. She described her district's late start for kindergarten classes to ease the transition, and she said that many teachers visit their students' homes.

Superintendent Tom Boasberg, representing Denver Public Schools (DPS), thanked the commission for its focus on early childhood. He talked about the importance of early childhood education, and described longitudinal data illustrating the importance of early learning. He spoke about the pressures of inadequate funding, and told the commission early learning is important in addressing achievement gaps. He stated that investments in early education is one of most important and most effective investments the state can make. Superintendent Boasberg stated that at more affluent schools, entering kindergartners are academically one to two years ahead of kindergartners entering his district's highest-poverty schools. He explained that the gap only continues to widen from kindergarten forward, and that Denver has a city-generated tax that helps provide additional funds for preschool. He pointed out that of the 8,500 four-year-olds in Denver, just over 70 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. He stated that DPS gets 2,600 half-day CPP slots from the state, or 1,300 full day slots, which allows DPS to enroll fewer than 1/4 of poverty-stricken four-year-olds in its preschools. He explained that since available funding meets only a small portion of the need, DPS supplements its funding through the Denver Preschool Program, mill levies, and the district moves a significant amount of per pupil money into full-day kindergarten and full-day preschool. Superintendent Boasberg stated that DPS has the same space challenges as other districts, and that the district has added purpose-built preschool centers that align with four or five elementary schools. He explained that as preschoolers are already affiliated with an elementary school, their teachers are part of the elementary school team and part of the preschool center team. He explained that this arrangement provides good professional development opportunities, as well as alignment with elementary teachers. Superintendent Boasberg shared that half of DPS' kindergartners come from district preschools, about 15 percent come from community providers or charter schools, and approximately 35 percent of incoming kindergartners get no preschool at all. He explained that DPS provides opportunities for kindergarten teachers and early childhood teachers from all types of providers to get to know one another to provide the best possible transition through the district's "Countdown to Kindergarten" program.

Superintendent Rico Munn, representing Aurora Public Schools, introduced himself and spoke about his district. He echoed the same thoughts expressed by the other superintendents on the panel. He spoke about his district and told the commission that there are 2,200 students in his district's preschool programs going to school in 29 elementary buildings, four child care centers, and eight child development centers. He discussed space constraints, and the high need in his district where 70 to 75 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. He explained that one-third of identified eligible 4-year-olds in the district and one-fourth of identified eligible 3-year-olds are served. He told the commission that throughout the district's service area within the city of Aurora, there are a very limited number of quality childcare providers. He described his district's efforts to partner with some programs, and explained that the district could not find sufficient quality programs to partner with. He told the commission that students who have gone through district preschool programs are more prepared for typical kindergarten classrooms both socially and academically. He said that large differentiation in kindergarten classrooms is a difficult challenge for kindergarten teachers.

Senator Martinez Humenik opened the discussion to questions from the commission. Representative Singer asked about zoning regulations over new developments that may or may not take into account the impact on school districts. Superintendent Fagen replied that the district receives land from developers, but no money to pay for buildings, and that the district needs to issue a bond for construction. Representative Singer stated that this unmet need for preschool is a statewide issue and asked if any organization is following what families do who cannot access public preschool. Superintendent Munn replied that families who cannot access preschool utilize friend and family care (FFC) and asked how to branch out training opportunities to those engaged in FFC. Superintendent Munn stated that those FFC providers need to understand the expectations of kindergarten teachers. Lisa Jansen Thompson added that in Adams County, four out of five school districts are surveying every kindergarten parent to find out what preschool education their children received and that the counties will use the results of the survey to determine what is actually happening in the community. She pointed out that it is difficult to identify FFC care and get those caregivers connected with available resources.

Senator Marble stated that the solution cannot be one-size-fits-all, and that what works for one district will not necessarily work for another. She noted that all the panelists come from the Denver area and expressed concerns about the thought of universal preschool. She stated that many parents have great concerns about their school systems, the Common Core State Standards, and federal control when education should be local. She asked the panelists about their contact with administrators in school systems outside the Denver metropolitan area. Lisa Jansen Thompson stated that her early childhood council works with other councils throughout the state, and that different communities have different wants and needs. She stated that parents in Commerce City do not necessarily want universal preschool, where other districts do. She explained that even when parents choose to keep kids home, the state should make sure those kids are getting what they need to be ready for kindergarten. She told the commission that high quality care makes the difference, that kindergarten teachers feel that students need to be both academically and socially ready for kindergarten.

Representative Pettersen thanked the panelists for the work they do. She said that parents should be able to choose whether or not they want to send their children to preschool, but that many families lack access and increasing access is a different conversation. She stated that there is a much higher need for preschool than there are opportunities and that a hurdle for all districts is access to classroom space. She asked the panelists what districts are doing to work with community-based preschool programs to use their space. Superintendent Boasberg replied that DPS partners with community-based providers, and that partnerships are based on quality as evaluated by Qualistar. He stated that his district wants to incentivize community-based providers to provide the highest quality programs possible. He told the commission that DPS works closely with community providers and charter schools, no matter the governance type, but that community providers are also full and that they have no space to make available to the district. He expressed that access is an enormous problem; that wealthy and middle class families have the choice to send their children to privately operated programs, but that many families do not have that choice, or any choice or resources at all. He stated that families in poverty, who desperately want to have preschool opportunities for their children, do not have any options. He told the commission that families with two working parents must often find family, friends, or neighbors to care for their children because nothing else is available. He said that access to early childhood education (ECE) remedies many types of gaps: achievement, health, etc. Superintendent Boasberg stated that Denver has a relatively high tax base to spend on ECE, but that poor rural communities do not have the access to the high sales tax base and tax increases that are available in Denver. He said that Denver is unique in being one of highest poverty districts in the state but also having one of the largest tax bases.

Senator Merrifield stated that access is a widely acknowledged problem. He asked the panelists if it would be advantageous if the state were to increase the number of CPP slots, since there are no additional preschool classrooms available in most districts. Superintendent Boasberg stated that it would be a huge advantage if the state provided operating expenses for preschool classrooms, because the decision would then be up to the local community to bond the new building space. Superintendent Gdowski expressed his agreement with Superintendent Boasberg and said that the challenge for Adams 12 is that the district already has the highest mill levy rate in the state, but because of its tax base, it does not have the most money. He spoke about inequality in local funding and explained how high mill levy rates, paired with low assessed tax rates can lead to a low amount of local funding. He stated that additional bonds would not be successful in his community. He said that more CPP slots would be great, but in Adams 12 that alone will not fix the space challenge. Superintendent Fagen stated her belief that preschool is not for everyone, and that administrators and state officials do not know what's best for every child. She said that Douglas County has the same capital issue as Adams 12, and that in her district the K-12 population is growing fast. She stated that her district would love more CPP slots but would have the same problem with space and allocating local dollars to space. Lisa Jansen Thompson spoke about additional CPP slots and asked how to best engage community providers to house those children. She stated that Mapleton Public Schools has one community-based child care center accepting CPP kids in the entire district.

Senator Martinez Humenik spoke about House Bill 15-1317 and the structure of pay for success programs. She told the commission that pay for success programs encourage business partners to get involved with preschools. She asked the panelists if any of them had reached out to local businesses to use their space for additional preschool classrooms. Superintendent Munn told the commission that Aurora Public Schools had looked at those options, but faced challenges because of the program's newness. He stated that the district would need to find the right partner and that success indicators would have to be neatly tied to that program.

Representative Wilson asked the panelists about the advantages and disadvantages of having the full-day kindergarten option attached to CPP slots. Superintendent Fagen said that in Douglas County, that flexibility is advantageous. She explained that most schools have 1/2 day kindergarten, where the second half of the day must be paid for by parents. Superintendents Boasberg and Munn agreed that districts should have the flexibility to decide how to use CPP slots. Superintendent Munn stated the importance of districts being able to report the success of those dollars. Representative Wilson asked about the interchangeable use of two terms: childcare and preschool. He asked if these are two separate things that metamorphose into preschool. He also asked whether or not childcare should be a business-related issue with the state pursuing businesses to provide daycare for children of employees. Lisa Jansen Thompson replied that the term childcare is generally used to refer to children's placement from infancy to age three or four, and that in a high-quality program, the 4-year-olds' classroom is a preschool. Superintendent Gdowski added that many parents want full day kindergarten or preschool so they can work, and that it does not matter which term is used, if children are provided with skills they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Representative Wilson asked the panelists what the solution is to this problem. Superintendent Munn stated that there is no silver bullet to solve these problems, that each superintendent knows the issues in his or her district, and that for most the current issues are capacity and access for families. Superintendent Boasberg agreed and stated that this discussion is not about the state mandating preschool, but that it would be wise for the state to invest in full day kindergarten and preschool programs. He said that parents are pounding on the district's doors for preschool programs, that his district is trying to meet the need with local funding, and that countries that succeed fund earlier education. He told the commission that some parents want to keep their children at home, but that the overwhelming majority want access to preschool. He explained that the state's investment would pay itself back multiple times over. Superintendent Gdowski relayed his idea for a Preschool Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program. He explained that communities where the ability to collect revenue to build preschools is lacking also have a large unmet demand, and that the establishment of a BEST-type fund at the state level where districts could apply for funding to build preschools would be beneficial.

Senator Martinez Humenik asked the panelists how they transition students from preschool to kindergarten. Superintendent Gdowski said that his district does a great job of transitioning students with disabilities into kindergarten, but that for other students, transitioning is less formal and less consistent. He said that it is tough to plan for transitions when preschoolers are dispersed away from elementary schools. Lisa Jansen Thompson said that in Adams County, the Early Childhood Council makes parents aware of what needs to happen through partnerships with community providers. Senator Martinez Humenik asked Ms. Jansen Thompson about a grant her organization had received. Ms. Jansen Thompson replied that her organization received a grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that focuses on social, emotional, and mental health but is not specifically about kindergarten readiness. Superintendent Fagen explained that Douglas County has detailed transition plans for special education students, that transition plans for students that qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches are slightly less formal, and that their typical peers have weak transition plans or none. She explained that her district is leveraging technology to upload student work for teachers to see. Erica Branscum said that transitioning students is easier when students remain in the same building. She explained that a team structure allows teachers to have data-driven discussions with families several times a year and that Mapleton Public Schools uses a combination of kindergarten fairs, school site visits, and home visits to aid in the transition. Superintendent Boasberg told the commission that DPS utilizes home visits, coordination between parents and teachers, direct coordination of kindergarten and preschool teachers, and close coordination with community providers. Superintendent Munn spoke about Aurora Public Schools' home visits, site visits, and readiness testing. He explained that for his district, the question is one of capacity and scale. He spoke about the importance of readiness plans and transition plans, and that having proper training in place for teachers is important to build continuity.

Senator Marble asked about a typical day for preschoolers, and about assessments in kindergarten. Erica Branscum explained that a typical day of preschool includes learning embedded throughout the school day in literacy, songs, a social-emotional curriculum, gross motor activities, fine motor activities, and lots of play to help young children gain the skills they need to succeed in kindergarten in developmentally appropriate ways. She spoke about assessment for kindergartners and relayed how Teaching Strategies Gold supports the development of children's skills in different domains embedded in a typical school day. She told the commission that it is not a sit-and-answer assessment, that it is an observational tool to help teachers gather data. She explained that Mapleton Public Schools also uses the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment to look at literacy skills in young children and that all the information is used to develop school readiness plans. Senator Marble asked whether or not preschools actually utilize a curriculum-based structure, and Ms. Branscum replied that they do. Senator Marble spoke about academic studies concerning the difficulties of assessing young children.

Senator Martinez Humenik stated that additional questions from the audience or commission members could be given to staff, who would distribute them to the panelists. She spoke about her experiences as a substitute teacher, having taught preschool and about the need for measurements because teachers do not always know where students have been. She explained that parents are engaged in the learning environment in preschools she has visited.

02:24 PM -- Child Welfare and Mental Health

Nia Wassink, Executive Director of Voices for Children Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), introduced herself and spoke about her organization in Boulder County. She explained that her organization's work is adjacent to the child welfare system, but not a part of it. She told the commission that CASAs serve kids ages 0 to 18 who have been victims of abuse or neglect. She pointed out that the children most likely to be abused or neglected are ages 0 to 2. Ms. Wassink said that while some children can remain in their homes, others are removed and placed in foster care. She explained that volunteer CASAs provide 10 to 20 hours per month to serve kids' needs and that unlike all other professionals in the child welfare or family court systems, CASAs serve only one family at a time. She relayed statistics from a handout to the commission (Attachment A) and told the commission that children with CASAs are more likely to be adopted, more likely to do better in school, and that her organization is working to expand this model. She pointed out that CASAs are now allowed to work in truancy court, which functions as a peripheral abuse and neglect system, and that CASAs got involved and uncovered previously unknown abuse.

Ms. Wassink spoke about a series of recommendations from former foster youth (Attachment B). She discussed access to mental health services and explained that rural courts and counties have a much harder time finding access to mental health for children and parents in the child welfare system. She told the commission about federal programs for youth aging out of foster care and explained that school district educational liaisons for foster youth are key to increasing graduation rates. She pointed out that foster youth have lower graduation rates than homeless youth, and that children in foster care will most likely end up incarcerated, homeless, and using emergency rooms for mental health needs. Ms. Wassink stated that addressing needs in childhood improves outcomes for Colorado's communities.

Senator Martinez Humenik asked whether or not CASAs interact with early childhood centers and preschools. Ms. Wassink replied that most reports that elicit an assessment come from schools. She stated that getting kids into school earlier provides a safety net, but that parents who have difficulty parenting find it challenging to get their kids to a program any earlier than is required. Senator Martinez Humenik stated that if children can get into programs earlier, recidivism would be reduced.

Representative Wilson asked if CASAs are volunteers, where does the funding come from to administer the program. Ms. Wassink spoke about the non-profit nature of her organization.

Senator Marble discussed her experiences as a volunteer CASA and spoke about the inability of the court system to do intelligent and complete investigations.

Senator Martinez Humenik spoke about the child welfare system and thanked Ms. Wassink for her work.

Representative Singer spoke about the challenges of social casework with kids, in particular staff turnover in social service departments. He asked Ms. Wassink how her organization addresses the turnover issue. Ms. Wassink replied that it can be detrimental to children to have a new caseworker every six months and explained that it adds to children's feelings of isolation and abandonment. She stated that caseworkers need more support, access to trauma resources, continuity of caseloads and positions. She also stated that the state's child welfare system should do more to keep siblings together.

Senator Martinez Humenik stated that staff turnover is a problem in early childhood settings too. She asked Ms. Wassink how her organization locates family, friend, or neighbor (FFN) caregivers. Ms. Wassink replied that many children are actually placed in FFN care, that children fare better there than in foster homes. She explained that family, friends, or neighbors will enroll children into educational programs sooner and more successfully than foster parents.

02:49 PM -- Early Childhood Colorado Framework

Sheryl Shushan, Manager of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission, spoke about the Early Childhood Colorado Framework. She introduced Maegan Lokteff representing Grand Beginnings, and Cindy Schulz representing the Marsico Family Foundation. Ms. Shushan gave an overview of the framework (Attachment C). She explained that the framework was developed in 2008 and that it acts as a resource and guide for comprehensive early childhood systems. She told the commission that the framework is used as a tool by stakeholders to communicate, identify strengths and gaps and that its purpose is to incorporate new research into the state's early childhood system. She pointed out that the Early Childhood Leadership Commission updated the framework in 2015 and that it consulted stakeholders via survey, meetings, focus groups, literature review, and expert consultations. She gave an overview of the changes to the framework, including best practices, inclusive of ages 0 to 8. She guided the commission members through the framework and described the core principles, fundamentals, strategies for action, outcomes, and results.

Representative Singer asked Ms. Shushan if there was a significant difference in needs from different geographic areas. Ms. Shushan replied that the ECLC did not ask about community needs, that it instead focused on vision, and what communities were working on.

Representative Wilson asked whether or not the ECLC had partnered with Planned Parenthood. Ms. Shushan replied that the ECLC had no formal ties to Planned Parenthood, but that organization may use the framework. Representative Wilson asked how the ECLC plans to achieve its vision of every child ready for school and achieving by third grade. Ms. Shushan replied that the framework is a vision if Colorado were to have a fully functioning early childhood system.

Representative Pettersen asked what legislators can do, given the current budget climate in the state. Ms. Shushan emphasized that creating sound policy is listed as a part of the framework and told the commission that many entities use the outcomes listed in the framework to think and dive deeper into what future policy changes might look like.

Senator Martinez Humeniz announced that there would be no breakout sessions due to a tornado watch, and that breakout sessions would take place at a special meeting on Monday, August 31, 2015. Committee discussion ensued.

03:25 PM

Ms. Schulz discussed the inclusion of preschool through grade 3 in the early childhood framework, and the importance of obtaining the buy-in of teachers and school districts. She discussed the delivery of services to special needs children.

Maegan Lokteff, Executive Director, Grand Beginnings in Grand County, shared a success story of health integration work funded by the Colorado Trust. She spoke about universal developmental screenings done by parents and shared with doctors and childcare providers.

03:35 PM -- Public Comment

Casey O'Donnell, representing the Colorado Center on Law and Policy (CCLP), spoke about his organization and its work on behalf of low income Coloradans. He spoke about CCLP's research on the availability of high quality childcare to parents as they pursue their own education. He discussed poverty rates among parents with varying educational attainment levels and the number of parents who cite lack of access to childcare as the main reason for not pursuing higher education. He proposed a task force to evaluate the best way to provide child care to low income parents and stated that the task force should include representatives from a variety of state agencies.

03:43 PM

The meeting adjourned.

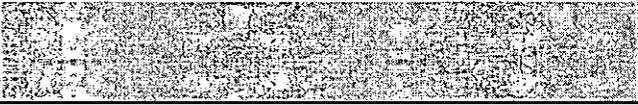
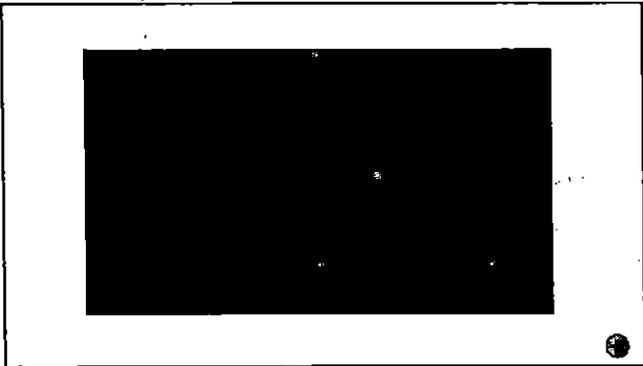
CASA EMPOWERING YOUR COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

Nia Wassink
Executive Director, Voices For Children CASA
Boulder, Colorado





WHAT IS CASA?

WHO ARE THESE CHILDREN?

- Victims of child abuse.
- 0 – 18+ years old.
- Most common type of abuse is neglect.
- Some may remain in their home, some may have been removed for their safety.

If they are in foster care, it's through
NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN!



WHAT DO CASAs DO?

1. Volunteer their time.
2. Become highly trained.
3. Work with ONE family/case at a time.
4. Support the children.
5. Advocate for the best interest of the child.



HOW PREVALENT IS IT?

- In 2014, there were 82,832 reports of child abuse.
- Of these, 46,567 were assessed.
- Of these, 10,962 were substantiated
- Of these, 4,831 children were removed from their home and placed in an out of home placement.
- Of these, 772 were adopted.



WHAT DIFFERENCE DO THEY MAKE?

- A child with a **CASA/GAL** volunteer is more likely to find a safe, permanent home:
 - More likely to be adopted
 - Half as likely to re-enter foster care
 - Substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care
 - More likely to have a plan for permanency, especially children of color
- Children with **CASA** volunteers get more help while in the system...
 - More services are ordered for the children



HOW ARE THEY EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE?

- **CASA** volunteers improve representation of children.
- Reduce the time needed by lawyers.
- More likely than paid lawyers to file written reports.
- For each of 9 duties, judges rated **CASA/GAL** volunteers more highly than attorneys.
- Highly effective in having their recommendations adopted by the court.

More can be found online at casaforchildren.org



EXPANSION OF CASA MODEL

- Truancy
- Juvenile Delinquency
- Youth In Transition



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- #1: Mental Health Timelines for Youth Entering Care (+ Access to Mental Health).
- #2: Increased normalcy for foster youth.
- #3: Guaranteed Housing for Youth who Age Out of Foster Care.



RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT)

- Support for Kinship Families
- Support for sibling relationships
- Support **CASA!**



QUESTIONS?

- Feel free to email/call
 - Nia Wassink
 - nia@vfcasa.org
 - 303.440.7059 (office) or 303.953.7492 (direct)



Policy Recommendations from the Experts – Former Foster Youth

The Chronicle of Social Change is highlighting each of the policy recommendations made this summer by the participants of the Foster Youth Internship Program (FYI), a group of 12 former foster youths who completed Congressional internships. The program is overseen each summer by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, with support from the Sara Start Fund.

#1: Mental Health Timelines for Youth Entering Foster Care

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/analysis/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-1-mental-health-timelines-for-youth-entering-foster-care/11507>

#2: Increasing Normalcy for Foster Youth

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-2-increasing-normalcy-for-foster-youth/11505>

#3: Strengthening Investment in Family-Run Group Homes

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/analysis/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-strengthening-investment-in-family-run-group-homes/11509>

#4: Increase Federal Academic Assistance for Foster Youth

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-4-increase-federal-academic-assistance-for-foster-youth/11503>

#5: Better Reporting Options for Maltreatment in Foster Care

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/analysis/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-5-better-reporting-options-for-maltreatment-in-foster-care/11520>

#6: Requiring Educational-Vocational Specialists

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-6-requiring-educational-vocational-specialists/11522>

#7: Specialized Services for Kids of Parents with Severe Mental Illness

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-7-specialized-services-for-kids-of-parents-with-severe-mental-illness/11515>

#8: Guaranteed Housing for Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-8-guaranteed-housing-for-youth-who-age-out-of-foster-care/11499>

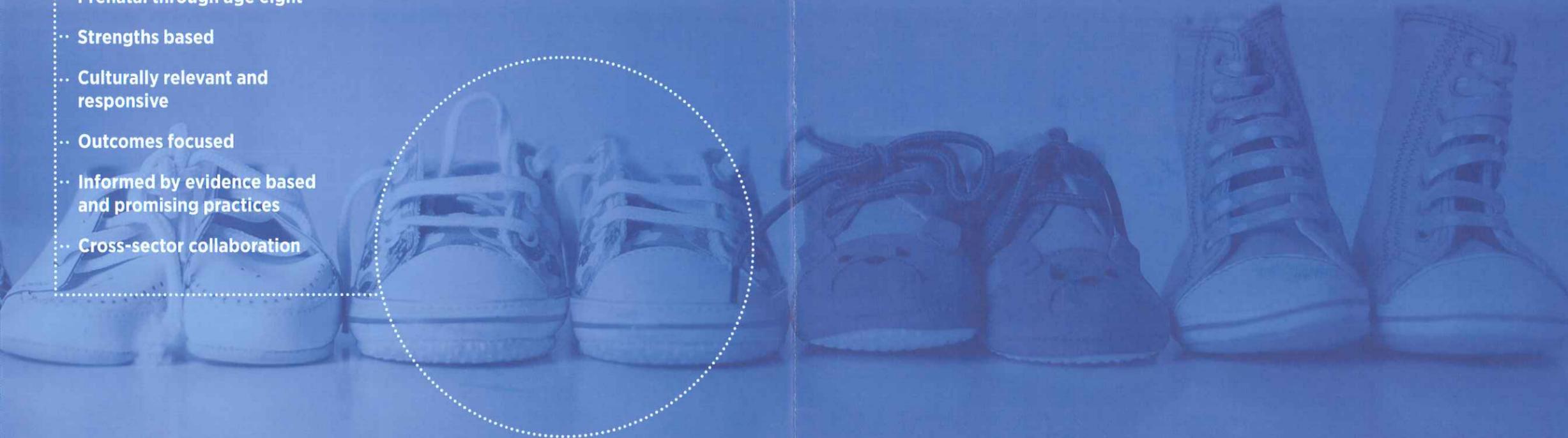
#9: Suicide Prevention for Current, Former Foster Youth

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-9-suicide-prevention-for-current-former-foster-youth/11518>

Core Principles

The *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* is based on and guided by these principles:

- Whole child and family centered
- Prenatal through age eight
- Strengths based
- Culturally relevant and responsive
- Outcomes focused
- Informed by evidence based and promising practices
- Cross-sector collaboration



This *Framework* is a shared vision for Colorado's young children and their families. It guides planning and mobilizes action to ensure all children are valued, healthy and thriving. The *Framework* is embraced by the Early Childhood Leadership Commission, foundations, state agencies, nonprofits and early childhood stakeholders across Colorado.

For more information visit earlychildhoodframework.org

ADOPTED JULY 2008 | UPDATED JULY 2015

Early Childhood Colorado Framework

A SHARED VISION

Strategies for Action

- Connect and Empower Families
- Build Community Capacity
- Implement Quality Standards
- Make Data Informed Decisions
- Develop and Retain the Workforce
- Support Consumer Affordability
- Advance Sustainable Business Practices
- Encourage Public Private Approaches
- Pursue Continuous Quality Improvement
- Ensure Coordinated Services
- Promote and Share Knowledge

Fundamentals

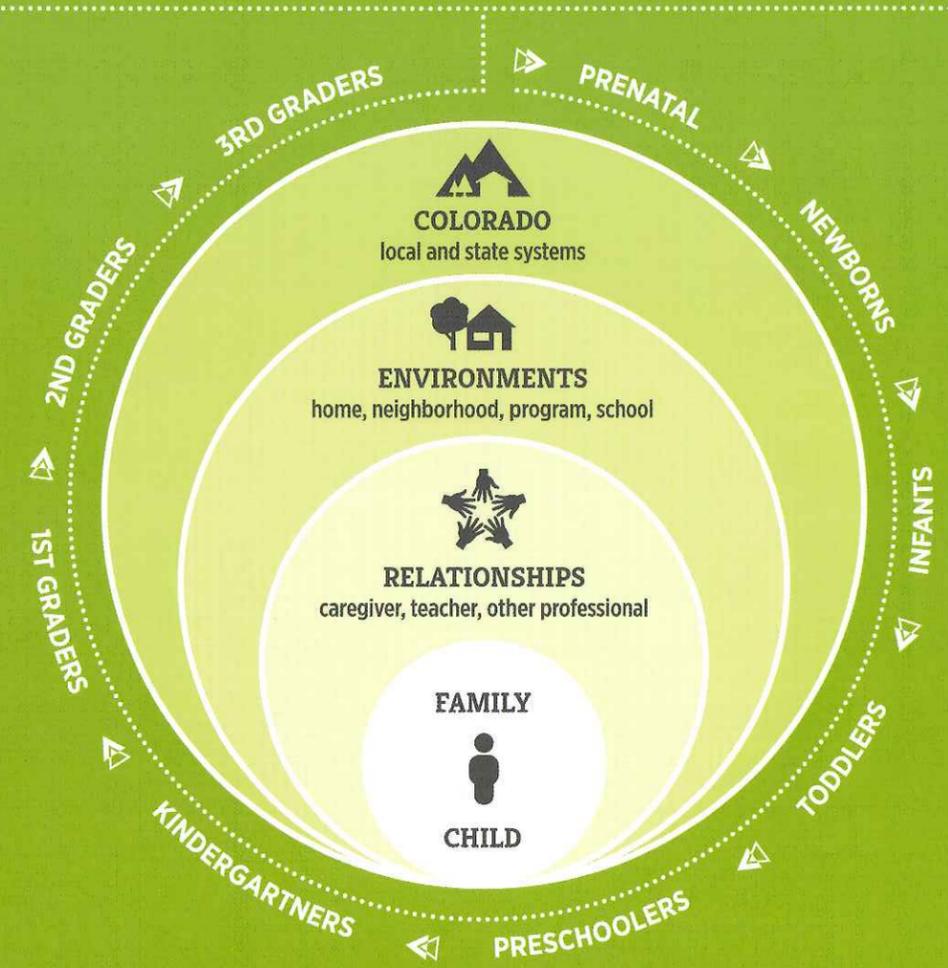
- Strong Partnerships
- Sufficient Investments
- Sound Policy
- Robust Public Engagement
- Shared Accountability
- Effective Leadership
- Relevant Education Opportunities

Outcomes ► access, quality and equity

 Family Support & Education
  Health & Well-Being
  Learning & Development

ACCESS	
■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family engagement and leadership opportunities exist within programs, schools and communities • Services and supports promote the well-being and resiliency of parents and caregivers • Family friendly policies and practices exist in the workplace
■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive health coverage and services are consistently utilized by pregnant women and children • Integrated and preventive maternal and child physical, behavioral and oral health services are available • All settings promote mental health and well-being through early identification, consultation and treatment
■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, coaching and ongoing training exist for caregivers, teachers and other professionals • Learning experiences and environments are high quality, developmentally appropriate and affordable
QUALITY	
■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family knowledge and capacity support children's healthy development and learning • Families advocate for high quality comprehensive services and supports that lead to future success
■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All health care providers, including mental health, deliver coordinated, family focused care • Settings and practices promote strong relationships, social and emotional development, appropriate nutrition and physical activity
■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal and informal care environments and education practices reach the highest levels of quality • Adults understand and support children's learning and development, including social and emotional • All settings provide effective transitions across and within programs, schools and systems
EQUITY	
■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, employment, housing, financial and legal supports contribute to family economic security • Families, including those with high needs, experience timely and coordinated services and supports
■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families have the ability to plan the number and timing of their children • All environments are safe, free of toxins, have affordable foods and offer physical activity • Children with special health, behavioral or developmental needs receive individualized services and supports
■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children are ready for school and achieving by 3rd grade regardless of ability, race, place, income, language and culture • Children, including those with high needs, receive timely, comprehensive and affordable academic services and transition supports

all children are valued, healthy and thriving



Results

-  **CHILD**
 Young children reach their developmental potential and are ready to succeed in school and in life
-  **ENVIRONMENTS**
 Environments that impact children are safe, stable and supportive
-  **RELATIONSHIPS**
 Adults are knowledgeable, responsive and interact effectively with and on behalf of children
-  **COLORADO**
 Localities and the state attain economic and social benefits by prioritizing children and families

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