



ECPAC
EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP
OF ADAMS COUNTY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2023

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Acknowledgements

ECPAC extends its deepest gratitude and appreciation for its partners, families and staff who helped support the development of this strategic plan. It is through this partnership, in the truest sense of the word, that we are able to make a positive difference for our community’s young children and families. *Thank you.*



Introduction and Background

Reaching the end of its ambitious 2015–2020 strategic plan, the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC) contracted with Joining Vision and Action (JVA) to facilitate a new strategic planning process that built upon past successes, stayed true to its origins and core purpose, and incorporated diverse stakeholder voices.

Beginning in fall 2019, ECPAC and JVA facilitated multiple engagements with stakeholders, including:

- One meeting with board members to develop the “big picture” direction, overarching framework, and goals
- One meeting with community partners to provide collaborative perspectives on crafting goals and strategies
- Two meetings with families who have worked with ECPAC, one facilitated in English and one in Spanish, to inform participant experience and needs moving forward
- Two meetings with staff members, one to focus on defining core values and one to gather insights into strategies

Information gathered from these meetings, in partnership with ECPAC leadership, was analyzed and synthesized into five primary areas of work that complement core focus areas established for Early Childhood Councils (ECCs), including quality, accessibility (as well as affordability), capacity, availability, and systems. Demographics and trends within the early childhood sector, both locally and statewide, were also reviewed and cross-referenced with organizational strengths to identify opportunities for ultimate impact.

This document shares the “big picture” guiding framework, goals, objectives, and strategies for a **three-year period beginning on July 1, 2020, and ending on June 30, 2023**. While this plan is considered the roadmap, ECPAC is committed to being responsive and providing the most relevant services for its community. Given this fact, and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning during the development of this plan, ECPAC acknowledges the possibility of pivoting as appropriate to best meet the needs of Adams County.

Strategic Foundation: Identity and Purpose

ECPAC is a partnership of community service organizations, families, and other key stakeholders such as elected officials and businesses, working together to increase equitable access to affordable, high-quality early childhood and family services and supports in the areas of early learning, health/mental health, and family support/education toward the ultimate goal that: **all Adams County children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn and succeed.**



Vision: All children and their families are valued, healthy, and thriving.

Mission: Building a community where every young child and their family can reach their full potential.

Core Business

The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC) is the official Early Childhood Council serving Adams County. Through legislation, ECPAC is charged to improve the system serving young children by improving equitable access to affordable, high-quality services in early learning, health/mental health, and family support and education, toward the ultimate goal that all children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn and succeed.

ECPAC's role is to facilitate communitywide efforts to address complex social issues related to kindergarten readiness and includes strategies to prevent and mitigate the impacts of high poverty, a high number of children born to teen parents, high rates of child abuse and neglect, and low academic performance.

ECPAC accomplishes this through its core business of improving systems, by:

- Establishing a strong governance system that supports its core business to build and maintain a strong partnership that promotes shared accountability for improved child and family outcomes and is fully engaged in the agreed upon community strategic plan
- Fostering leadership of community/family members and service providers
- Ensuring sufficient investments are available through sharing resources, improved use of existing resources and obtaining new resources
- Strengthening the public will to best support young children and their families
- Working together to address system and policy barriers to improved outcomes
- Providing professional development opportunities to improve the quality of cross-domain early childhood services toward maximum benefit

ECPAC provides direct services to families of young children in collaboration with other community partners to fill gaps and reduce barriers as identified through assessments with partners and the community. Ongoing evaluation of services informs systems change.

Partnership Guiding Principles

ECPAC is a governing and collaborative body with multiple perspectives and sets of values from each of its community-organization and family partners. However, its partners have identified shared points of emphasis and focus for their work together. These “guiding principles” are as follows:

- **To be accountable for access and quality.** Agencies will hold each other accountable for the accessibility, quality of services, and use of funding.
- **To be adaptable and flexible.** The system has an ongoing and dynamic process of adapting to changing community needs and continuous quality improvement.
- **To incorporate assessment of practices and outcomes.** There is a continuous assessment of programmatic, organizational, and financial outcomes to determine effectiveness.
- **To provide comprehensive and collaborative services.** The system has a comprehensive service array that is delivered in a collaborative manner.
- **To provide culturally responsive services.** Services and supports are delivered in a manner that fits with the family’s culture, values, and beliefs and considers the whole child in a strength-based approach.
- **To support family involvement.** Authentic family involvement exists both at the service level and the systems level.
- **To be sustainable and efficient.** Agencies share certain funding streams and resources and find creative ways to use resources and promote efficiency.

Organizational Core Values

Underpinning ECPAC's ultimate goal, vision, and mission are its core values—the key tenets of operations that are to be upheld no matter what. To that end, ECPAC staff identified the following core values to guide short-term and long-term decision-making:

EQUITY

ECPAC creates an environment of trust, promotes honest conversations, and strives to make decisions that help reduce system inequities and biases.

PROFESSIONALISM

ECPAC is an organization that provides dependable leaders to work in the community who strive for excellence and offer expertise in a respectful and collaborative manner.

EXCELLENCE

ECPAC is an organization that is accountable, innovative, adaptable, and bold; promotes the delivery of high-quality service to our partners and community; and supports leadership.

TEAMWORK

ECPAC is an organization that values everyone for their unique role and strengths and creates a welcoming, compassionate, collaborative, and supportive team-based work environment.

INTEGRITY

ECPAC is dependable, reliable, and trustworthy; ensures good follow-through; and maintains confidentiality, honesty, and openness whether information is favorable or unfavorable.

DEDICATION

ECPAC staff are dedicated and loyal to our organizational mission of helping children and families thrive.

Strategic Vision and Goals

Looking ahead to the “big picture” vision of what having capacity for a more equitable, high-quality, accessible (including affordable), available system will look like, the following goals were identified. *ECPAC imagines a 2023 where ...*



Community members, partners, and service providers are better positioned to understand and act upon matters related to early childhood.

Goal #1: ECPAC partners will **support increased and equitable functioning of the early childhood system**, through visible advocacy, systems and partnerships development, thought leadership, and shared accountability.



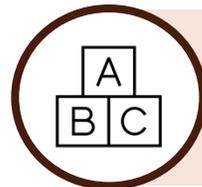
Children and families experience services and supports that honor their needs, culture, and lived experiences.

Goal #2: ECPAC partners will **champion high-quality, family-centered, and equitable programs and best practices** by actively supporting their adoption by partners, by early care and education programs, and within internal processes.



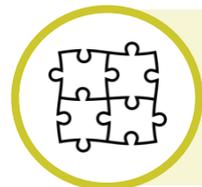
Early childhood and family services and supports are increasingly equitable, economical, and easy to access.

Goal #3: ECPAC partners will **promote greater access to family-centered resources** that support family stability, health, and well-being, through **decreasing opportunity gaps and barriers**.



Preschool and childcare options are more abundant than ever before, supporting improved kindergarten readiness and increased options for family stability.

Goal #4: ECPAC partners will **support increased availability of and equitable access to quality preschool and childcare programs**, through efforts to increase funding, family-supportive policies, and workforce development opportunities.



ECPAC staff, systems, and resources are strong and responsive.

Goal #5: ECPAC partners will **fully address family and early childhood community needs** through appropriate governance, staffing and financial means, diversification of funding strategy, and equitable operations practices.

More details, including specific activities to support attainment of these goals and related strategies, as well as implicated financial resources, parties responsible for ensuring execution, and a proposed timeline, are included in a separate workplan. To access this document, or for more information, please visit: <https://www.ecpac.org/about-ecpac/vision-mission-goals/>.



Systems

Community members, partners and service providers are better positioned to understand and act upon matters related to early childhood.



Quality

Children and families experience services and supports that honor their needs, culture, and lived experiences.



Accessibility

Early childhood and family services and supports are increasingly equitable, economical, and easy to access.



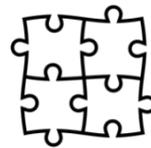
Availability

Preschool and childcare options are more abundant than ever before, supporting improved kindergarten readiness and increased options for family stability.

Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC)

Strategic Plan 2020–2023

The Big Picture



Capacity

ECPAC staff, systems, and resources are strong and responsive.

Mission

Building a community where every young child and their family can reach their full potential.

Vision

All children and their families are valued, healthy, and thriving.



Community members, partners, and service providers are better positioned to understand and act upon matters related to early childhood.



Goal #1: ECPAC partners will **support increased and equitable functioning of the early childhood system**, through visible advocacy, systems and partnerships development, thought leadership, and shared accountability.

Objective	Strategies
Increase advocacy efforts for policies at institutional, local, state, and national levels.	<p>Participate in discussions and decision-making activities related to topics impacting young children and families.</p> <p>Engage with elected officials to raise awareness, share relevant data, and present solutions or adjustments to policies.</p> <p>Elevate family voice in community conversations.</p>
Increase community exposure to, understanding of, and active participation with early childhood efforts and issues.	<p>Create and deploy shared campaigns related to early childhood resources, approaches, and policy issues.</p> <p>Provide training to community members regarding key topics and messaging strategies.</p> <p>Utilize existing public forums to educate community members and encourage public support for early childhood programs and efforts.</p>
Increase partner engagement and collaboration toward improved system functioning and outcomes.	<p>Build and strengthen cross-sector partnerships that support increased access to affordable, high-quality, comprehensive, culturally responsive services.</p> <p>Strengthen forums for early care and education programs, other early childhood and family service organizations, and caregivers to communicate and collaborate.</p>
Increase family voice and community engagement within early childhood systems and discussions.	<p>Build and expand opportunities for increased levels of family leadership, contribution, and participation.</p> <p>Create accessible and equitable feedback loops for families to share their experiences and recommendations.</p>
Strengthen shared accountability , structures, and systems.	<p>Create collaborative evaluation systems to better understand communitywide impact and to support partner accountability.</p> <p>Engage early care and education providers and community partners in regular review and discussion of data collected to inform system and program decisions.</p>

Children and families experience services and supports that honor their needs, culture, and lived experiences.



Goal #2: ECPAC partners will **champion high-quality, family-centered, and equitable programs and best practices** by actively supporting their adoption by partners, by early care and education programs, and within internal processes.

Objective	Strategies
Increase visibility of issues and solutions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Support communitywide discussions about co-creating strategies to improve equity in Adams County.
	Provide opportunities for the early childhood community and those with lived experience to openly share experiences and brainstorm solutions.
	Identify and openly challenge policies or practices that are intentionally or unintentionally discriminatory or do not improve upon existing inequities.
Increase implementation of high-quality and equitable programs and best practices.	Work with community partners and organizations to integrate high-quality and equitable programs and systems.
	Promote and use research-based framing and shared messaging materials to encourage best-practice communication approaches.
Strengthen available best-practice and equity-based trainings and development opportunities .	Increase communitywide participation with early childhood-related trainings, informational sessions, and development opportunities.
	Expand trainings to include equity-related offerings, such as cultural awareness and responsiveness, trauma-informed care practices and principles, and identification and decrease of stigmas.
	Continue to provide informational resources in languages other than English.

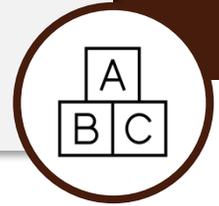
Early childhood and family services and supports are increasingly equitable, economical, and easy to access.



Goal #3: ECPAC partners will **promote greater access to equitable and family-centered resources** that support family stability, health, and well-being, through **decreasing opportunity gaps and barriers**.

Objective	Strategies
Increase access to and engagement with family-centered resources.	<p>Expand quantity and flexibility of home- and community-based services to address gaps and barriers to access.</p> <p>Incorporate two-generation programming awareness and implementation across all services.</p> <p>Expand marketing efforts to increase visibility of and knowledge about available services.</p>
Increase resources available for supporting family stability, health, and well-being.	<p>Explore expansion of resource hubs or available hub services to increase access for underserved communities.</p> <p>Advocate for flexible funding to support community-led initiatives, programs, and structures at institutional, local, state, and national levels.</p>
Decrease gaps and barriers to accessing services.	<p>Identify and advocate for community-level policy changes that positively impact the social determinants of health for families with young children.</p> <p>Assess and address institutional-level policy or procedural barriers internally and with partner organizations.</p> <p>Connect with local businesses to share information about and promote the adoptions of family-friendly practices.</p>

Preschool and childcare options are more abundant than ever before, supporting improved kindergarten readiness and increased options for family stability.



Goal #4: ECPAC partners will **support increased availability of and equitable access to quality preschool and childcare** programs, through efforts to increase funding, family-supportive policies, and workforce development opportunities.

Objective	Strategies
<p>Increase capacity and availability of quality early childhood education and care.</p>	<p>Increase the number of childcare slots available in high-quality programs for all children in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (Community Dispersion of High Quality CCCAP and Children Served in High Quality Programs).</p> <p>Promote the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System and the Early Learning Developmental Guidelines at least monthly.</p> <p>Promote strong business practices and high-quality early care and education through professional development and coaching.</p> <p>Increase Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System engagement at a Level 2 or higher to 60%.</p>
<p>Increase advocacy efforts for the development of and access to early childcare and education funding.</p>	<p>Bring together government, business leaders, and private foundations for collaborative funding discussions.</p> <p>Raise awareness for and promote investment in early care and education funding programs and initiatives.</p> <p>Advocate for equitable access to early care and education funding, reimbursement, and related policies.</p>
<p>Strengthen the early care and education (ECE) workforce and pipeline.</p>	<p>Support concurrent enrollment programs for high school students interested in pursuing a career in ECE.</p> <p>Advocate for state and local policies that support the ECE workforce and allow for the creation of new pathways to help teachers become qualified sooner.</p> <p>Engage more early care and education providers in available high-quality professional development training and coaching programs.</p>

ECPAC staff, systems, and resources are strong and responsive.



Goal #5: ECPAC partners will **fully address family and early childhood community needs** through appropriate staffing, governance, and financial means, diversification of funding strategy, and equitable operations practices.

Objective	Strategies
Increase alignment of staff with program needs and organizational resources.	<p>Assess regularly staff duties and organizational structure to ensure compatibility with available resources, strategic priorities, program requirements, and staff strengths and interests.</p> <p>Enhance staff engagement in program decision-making processes and discussions.</p> <p>Position programming to be flexible, nimble, and responsive to internal and external factors.</p>
Increase efficiency and effectiveness of board governance .	<p>Complete biannual board assessment to inform and set capacity and effectiveness goals.</p> <p>Strengthen fundraising capacity of board and Resource Development Committee.</p> <p>Strengthen process for equitable decision-making.</p>
Increase and diversify funding streams .	<p>Prioritize pursuit of and advocacy for unrestricted and general operating funding.</p> <p>Explore alternative funding sources (outside of grants).</p> <p>Develop an internal culture of fundraising.</p>
Increase equitable operations and practices.	<p>Review internal policies and procedures with an equity lens and update them accordingly.</p> <p>Encourage all staff to participate in communitywide discussions or advocacy opportunities to advance early childhood and family priorities.</p> <p>Increase diversity of staff and board members to reflect community demographics.</p>



Recommendations and Closing

ECPAC has a robust and celebrated history of being a leader and positive change catalyst within the early childhood field, not only in Adams County but statewide and nationwide. This trajectory is anticipated to continue to climb with the implementation of the strategic plan outlined above. To help stay focused on its goals and intended outcomes, it is recommended that ECPAC institute a “strategy screen” to help determine how future opportunities or partnerships may fit within its aims, including the following questions:

- Will this opportunity support the achievement of our vision?
- Will this opportunity support our mission?
- Does this opportunity align with all of our partnership guiding principles?
- Does this opportunity align with all of our organizational core values?
- Do we have the resources, staff capacity, and partnership engagement to be successful?

The answer to the above questions should be an unequivocal “yes.” If so, the following should also be considered:

- Will this opportunity negatively impact capacity or resources (e.g., staff, program delivery, etc.)?
- Would another partner be better equipped or positioned to take the lead?

If current staff would be unnecessarily taxed, or another partner may be a better fit, it is recommended that discussions continue before ECPAC commits to any additional activities that are outside the scope of this strategic plan. If ECPAC keeps these questions top of mind and continues its exceptional level of coordination with and consideration of all its stakeholders, the “big picture” for early childhood providers and families in 2023 looks bright.