



EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



@ECCLACOLORADO

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present the 2019 Annual Report for the Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA). This is our first annual report and as I am writing this message in preparation for its release, I am so excited about what the future has in store for this organization. ECCLA began in 1998 as an informal collaborative among the leadership of Colorado's Early Childhood Councils, and in 2013, grew to become an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Today, we are focusing on the support of our membership and expansion of ECCLA programs and services towards building a strong early childhood system in Colorado.

During 2019, ECCLA went through a leadership transition and spent much of the year under the direction of an interim director. ECCLA staff exhibited strong leadership to provide continuity for the organization during this transition and succeeded in many key accomplishments that are shared in this report. Of significant note was the successful transition of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® COLORADO Scholarship Program to ECCLA. The organization also received significant support from the Buell Foundation to offer grants to licensed family child care homes. This grant program will continue into 2020 and is intended to help family child care homes start-up, expand, or maintain consistent operations, increase capacity, and reduce the number closing their doors due to financial restrictions. At the core of ECCLA's mission is support for all of Colorado's 34 Early Childhood Councils which serve 63 of 64 counties. This has been traditionally fulfilled through advocacy, capacity building, and technical assistance for Councils. I am thrilled that early childhood workforce supports were added to ECCLA's activities in support of our mission.

Finally, as a state that highly values local control, Colorado has a long-established system of locally developed and trusted Early Childhood Councils that are counted on for their expertise, coordination, and support of early childhood programs and services in their communities. I strongly believe that supporting healthy children, families, and communities requires all stakeholders to have a voice in the process. A robust statewide early childhood system that effectively improves the quality, capacity, accessibility, and equity of services for young children and their families requires this level of local implementation and leadership. Colorado is fortunate to have a robust early childhood system that serves and represents local needs, and ECCLA is proud to represent and advocate for increased support and sustainability of this system.

As you will read in this report, with the incredible support of our funders and partners, ECCLA has made successful strides towards advancing our mission. As we look toward the future, I can't wait to see what we can accomplish together to support young children and families in Colorado. Thank you for your support of ECCLA.

With Gratitude,

Amy Payton, Executive Director



ABOUT US



MISSION:

ECCLA improves the quality, capacity, and equity of services and supports for Colorado's young children and their families through a statewide network of Early Childhood Councils and key stakeholders. We meet this mission through local and statewide collaboration and leadership, program and policy alignment, and scaling innovation.



VISION:

Colorado's Early Childhood Councils are successful in building and strengthening a robust and sustainable early childhood system that meets local needs. Investments in early childhood services will be a social priority, and the collective impact of our work will be long-term, demonstrable, and valued.



WHO WE ARE:

ECCLA is a collective impact leader with strong relationships among all of Colorado's 34 Early Childhood Councils who serve 63 of 64 counties. We are a collective voice and statewide hub which leverages the expertise and network of Early Childhood Councils to advance shared outcomes for young children, families, and the early childhood workforce.

As the membership association for Early Childhood Councils, we provide technical assistance and capacity building, leverage policy and advocacy, scale innovation, improve workforce supports for early childhood professionals, advance collective impact, and facilitate partnerships. In collaboration with Early Childhood Councils, our efforts enable us to effectively align, leverage, scale, and lead solutions that contribute to building and supporting Colorado's robust early childhood system.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCILS

ECCLA convenes Councils in person four times per year, and remotely a minimum of twelve times per year, to **share innovation and expertise, engage in networking, and facilitate partnerships**. During our meetings, we provide dedicated training and assistance to develop the capacity of Councils. In recent years, Councils have faced declining revenue and are seeking new ways to communicate, coordinate, and partner to ensure their strategic plans are implemented and the needs of young children and families in the communities they serve are met.

To promote sustainability, ECCLA concentrated **training and assistance on communicating impact and succession and business planning**. As a result, Councils are building stronger awareness of their local impact, developing seamless leadership transition plans, and creating new opportunities for partners to engage with their work.



ADVOCATING TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCILS

ECCLA has diligently worked to develop relationships with state policymakers and communicate how local Early Childhood Councils positively impact their communities. In prior years, state general funds helped to support the local systems building efforts of Councils, but those funds have diminished over time. Without future state investment, vast areas of Colorado may be left without coordinated and aligned early childhood services and supports. **Systems building focuses on activities to promote shared results for children and families** such as facilitating structures and connections, capacity building and sustainability, community and family engagement, and professional development and recruitment of the early childhood workforce.

Councils serve as **essential partners for the local implementation of state programs and services** that impact young children and families. They also work with community partners to **innovatively respond to local gaps and needs**. ECCLA is committed to ensuring policymakers and state partners value this important network to contribute to shared outcomes among local and statewide early childhood systems.



KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



LEVERAGING LOCAL EXPERTISE TO INCREASE WORKFORCE SUPPORTS

ECCLA successfully **expanded our programs** to provide additional supports to the early childhood workforce including the **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® COLORADO Scholarship Program and Family Child Care Home Facility Improvement Initiative (FCCHI)**. T.E.A.C.H. is a national, evidence-based strategy that creates access to higher education for the early childhood workforce through comprehensive scholarships. While FCCHI is intended to help family child care homes start-up, expand, or maintain consistent operations, increase capacity, and reduce the number closing their doors.

Understanding the value of local expertise, ECCLA aligned our efforts with Councils to communicate and coordinate these programs to address early childhood workforce needs across the state. We see this as a crucial area of future growth for ECCLA. Our statewide approach and coordination of the network of Councils **create an optimal environment to develop and disseminate workforce supports** in communities across Colorado.



INCREASING PARTNERSHIPS TO COORDINATE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

ECCLA is focused on increasing partnerships with Councils to coordinate services and supports for young children, families, and the early childhood workforce. During 2019, ECCLA formally partnered with the **Early Childhood Health Outdoors Initiative (ECHO) and Mental Health Colorado**.

In coordination with ECHO, ECCLA engaged Councils to **deepen regional expertise with the early childhood workforce on outdoor learning environments** which have significant benefits for the healthy development of young children. Further, ECCLA and Mental Health Colorado collaborated with Councils to facilitate community conversations on opportunities and challenges to **improve early childhood mental health supports and social-emotional development** in local communities.

OUR STATEWIDE IMPACT



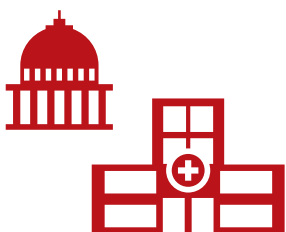
All 34 Early Childhood Councils in 63 of 64 Colorado counties were **supported by ECCLA** with an operating budget of \$834,299.

2 new formal partnerships were established with ECCLA to expand supports and services for young children and families: Early Childhood Health Outdoors Initiative (ECHO) with the National Wildlife Federation and Mental Health Colorado.



78 scholarship recipients were supported through the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® COLORADO Scholarship Program which included tuition assistance, books, travel stipend, and career counseling.

ECCLA represented Councils at over **25 on-going coalitions, convenings, and advisory committees** to provide a statewide perspective for the needs of all Colorado's young children.



Councils **engaged more than 1100 local partners to leverage resources and expand services and supports for families** including local government, early care and education, mental health and health care, and parents and caregivers.



MEMBER VOICES



"The existence of ECCLA is what connects the local early childhood work across the state. ECCLA brings Councils together with a powerful and influential voice for Colorado's early childhood system."

Sherri Valdez, Early Childhood Council of the San Luis Valley



"As a local Early Childhood Council, being a member of ECCLA is critical to building a fair and equitable statewide system of early childhood programs and services for young children and their families. The interdependence between local and statewide development is how Colorado grows and that interdependence needs to be nurtured. ECCLA is a place where that kind of work happens."

Danielle Butler, Early Childhood Council of Boulder County



"ECCLA serves as the 'hub' for Early Childhood Councils to meet, network, and share information while providing communications, policy, advocacy, and support to help Councils do their jobs to the best of their ability. I'm very thankful for the ECCLA staff and organization."

Sandra Gregory, Douglas County Early Childhood Council



"Being a member of ECCLA has helped to increase my skills around policy and advocacy. I have enjoyed building partnerships at local, regional, and state levels. Participation on the board has helped me become a better leader. I enjoy shining a light on the work of ECCLA while building and growing collaborative relationships with stakeholders, funders, and Councils."

Stacy Petty, Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council



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Thank you to our staff, board members, partners, and Early Childhood Councils for a successful year advancing Colorado's early childhood system!

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