Mesa County Partnership for Children and Families

ECLC P-ECT waiver

12 Month Update

Mesa County is facing a severe shortage of early childhood education (ECE) teachers. The lack of available child care is impacting the ability of families to work and to effectively provide quality ECE for children. With the spread of the Coronavirus, it is even more important than ever that parents have safe, reliable care to support their return to work and child care providers have qualified and well trained staff to care for the children in service. In addressing this current workforce crisis, the Child Care 8,000 (CC8K) initiative has developed long term goals and strategies to close the ECT gaps. We requested Mesa County Child Care Centers and Preschools with a Colorado Shines Level of three or higher, in good standing with Child Care Licensing, be allowed to hire people into the ECT position who are not yet fully qualified, with a grace period of up to 12 months for the ECT to complete all qualifications.

With 13% (20 sites) of our centers rated a Level of three or higher, many of our centers are not eligible for the waiver. Of the 20, 13 eligible sites are school district preschool programs, which are unable to apply as the Directors are also the ECTs in dual roles. Of the other seven eligible sites we have had no new waivers utilized. The quality rating requirement and required paperwork were reported as barriers to utilization. The statewide Child Development Associate (CDA) waiver that followed this waiver deemed to be an easier option that we promoted.

Simultaneous to the P-ECT waiver, Mesa County had increased the opportunities for CDA credentials in the community, offering full scholarships, stipends, increased availability, and varied models. With the waiver traction slow, we focused on increasing the CDA, Director qualification scholarships, and Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care (EQIT). Partnering with our Mesa County Workforce Center and CDHS led to internship opportunities for CDA candidates and well as expanding college scholarships in the ECE field. CDA opportunities have largely expanded with the most recent partnership between The Office of Early Childhood, Mesa County Public Health, and Red Rocks Child Care Innovations to expand opportunities to 13 Western Slope counties, offering scholarships, stipends, and career coaching for 70 more candidates.