Meeting Objectives:

- Approve the meeting minutes from June 12, 2020
- Learn about progress on PDG strategies
- Hear updates from CDE
- Discuss organization and efforts supporting FFN care
- Allow an opportunity for updates, new business and public comment


Welcome and Review of Minutes

Melissa Colsman welcomed everyone to the Program Quality and Alignment (PQA) meeting and thanked all for joining. Melissa asked motioned to approve the minutes from June 12, 2020. Nicole Riehl motioned the minutes for approval, Amber Bilby seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Update on Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Strategies:

**Business practices work progress and expectations:** Kristen Lang shared that due to COVID-19 the Preschool Development team has shifted funds to roll out new business supports for providers. She stated that better business support for providers has been a need in the community and a finding of SB 19-063, and a strategy in the Preschool Development Renewal Grant. Angela Ben-Zekry informed the group that the business practices and supports trainings would be 4-6 week sessions; there will be a session dedicated to family child care homes and a session in Spanish. The sessions will be held on nights and weekends. Included will be one on one consultation with business consultants to help providers set up a sustainable business plan. Early Childhood Councils will be important partners in this work. They will be making referrals and will be available during the training sessions to help with any child care specific questions. They expect the full plan for the sessions to be released in early August.

**CDA and Micro grants:** Angela Ben-Zekry discussed another PDG strategy that would make available start up or expansion micro grants to providers. The primary focuses of eligibility for using the funds are around trainings, fees and supplies. She stated that they should have more information on the micro grants in early August. Angela also informed the group that the grant will fund 220 newly enrolled Child Development Associate (CDA) candidates and 50 CDA renewal candidates. The funds will pay for the enrollment in training and the assessment costs. She stated that CDA advisors will also be made available to candidates through this program to help with enrollment into the training and developing portfolios for the assessment. She stated that the existing CDA coaches will be leveraged to help support these candidates as well.

**Inclusion Cohort:** Kristen Lang announced that micro grants will be made available to a cohort of child care providers to ensure providers are creating classrooms that are accessible for children with physical and
development needs. They are partnering with the Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering at the University of Colorado Denver. The cohort will consist of 25 providers from across the state, including both center and family child care homes in rural and urban areas. The program will also include tailored technical assistance and training for the providers. She stated that the application to be part of the cohort will be available in early August and be open for the entire month.

Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Restart and Recovery Resources
Melissa Colsman walked through the CDE 20-21 School year toolkit on the Department’s website. She shared you can find the toolkit by visiting https://www.cde.state.co.us/ and selecting COVID-19 Resources for Schools. This resource was developed by CDE guidance for school districts to have resources when making decisions on the 20-21 school year. Melissa shared that the toolkit has resources related to health & safety, continuity of learning, conditions of learning, planning & communication and policy & funding.

Discussion on Supporting Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Care
Melissa Colsman reminded the group that the Subcommittee will be trying a new structure for the meetings that will allow time for a deep dive into a topic. She stated that this meeting will highlight Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) care. At the end of the presentation there will be time for discussion, questions and time to share other efforts from organizations that are support FFN care during this time.

History & Background: Betty Dalton shared that she is a licensed family child care provider who has been providing care for children for over 48 years. She is the president of the Denver Association for Family Child Care and has been advocating for early childhood for many years. She discussed the history behind the advances to the early childhood profession. She shared that legislation for early childhood started without family child care homes included, and she acknowledged Anna Jo Haynes for advocating for family child care. Betty shared that she has volunteered to be part of new initiatives and programs as a way to advance the profession and change the perspective for providers to not be considered babysitters, but educators.

Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition: Lorena Garcia stated that the Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition (CSPC) provides advocacy and training for parents and child care providers to be meaningfully engaged in the success of their children’s education, to close the achievement gap and ensure successful future educational outcomes. The CSPC was founded in 1980 by a grassroots group of parents that were noticing and experiencing the inequities in the education system. This group began training parents on how to address these inequities and conflicts. Since 1980, CSPC has evolved in its mission to address the structural issues in education. It began with working to close the achievement gap between Latinx students and their white peers. This has come from systemic racism in society, and they have worked to address barriers such as pre-k education, school readiness training for parents, and working directly with schools and districts in ensuring proper supports exist for these families. In 2004, CSPC identified the need to support child care providers as well as parents to close the opportunity gap. They began this work conducting an in-depth study to learn who/where these informal child care providers are. They discovered that many children were being cared for by grandparents, aunts, sisters, neighbors, friends and co-worker’s friends. From this work, Providers Advancing Student Outcomes (PASO) was created.

PASO trains informal childcare providers to create high-quality-learning opportunities for the children in their care.

- CSPC has trained over 1300 providers since 2006
- 120 hours of instruction over the course of 15 weeks
- Three Home visits to monitor for improvements in Childcare environment
- Covers the six core competencies of the Child Development Associates (CDA)
- Graduates are qualified to apply for the CDA
- PASO is culturally competent

PASO is an evidence based program. Results from a 5 year evaluation found that that there was a statistically significant, positive improvement - 11 Normal Curve Equivalency (NCE) points gained on average on a child’s general development score - for children whose providers participated in the PASO program. For the average child in the program, an increase of 11 NCE points translated to the child moving
from the sixth to the 17th percentile on the DP-3 measure of child development. Children showed the highest percentile gains on the Cognitive subcomponent.

Lorena discussed some of the challenges for FFN providers including: requirements for home-child care providers, a low threshold for number of children providers can care for, no benefits such as health care, no subsidies, the high overhead cost for FFN providers with very low ROI: liability insurance, cost of meals and saying no to families with children in need of care. Some of the solutions from providers are to add child care exemption to HB 1023, to revise the home safety requirements for home-based child care, create a group FFN provider liability plan that providers can buy into at a reduced rate and to develop partnerships with grocery stores and food banks to support the healthy nutrition for FFN providers. Lastly, Lorena shared that CSPC put out a survey to their FFN network asking what are the needs and challenges for them to provide care during COVID-19. She shared that accessing food came up as a challenges and rental assistance as a big need. Overall the biggest need was access to personal protective equipment. Lorena stated that the survey results will be shared with Mile High United Way and Early Milestones Colorado to help informed research into the early childhood COVID-19 response.

**Spring Institute**- Khatira Amn shared that the Spring Institute was the first organization in Colorado focused on diversity training, and their intercultural training & consulting services have been helping nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and global businesses communicate successfully across cultures for over 35 years. The Spring Institute is a nationally recognized provider of effective intercultural learning programs and services. They have a proven track record of success, measured and documented through program outcomes and client feedback.

Khatira discussed the Ready Tots program at Spring Institute which includes children and their parents or caregivers in a community based program learning and developing skills together to improve health and access to early childhood education. The programming focuses on the social and emotional development of the child and parent education. Ready Tots programming is offered at two different sites in Denver in the Colfax/ Yosemite neighborhood. Families are involved in the good health and academic success of their child. Children in the Ready Tots program are enrolled in preschool by age four, are connected to early intervention and have access to services prior to entering school when necessary. Families and children learn about healthy snacks and the importance of physical activity. All children and families enrolled have a Primary Care Provider.

**Growing Readers Program/ State Libraries**- Joyce Johnson discussed the Growing Readers Together program at Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Buell Foundation is supporting the Colorado State Library’s (CSL) partnership with public library systems across the state to implement Growing Readers Together (GRT). Between 2016 and 2018, fifteen library systems piloted a variety of ways to engage with Family, Friend & Neighbor (FFN) child care providers through an enhanced focus on early literacy. Building on those experiences, in its third year of operation GRT is moving beyond the pilot phase and expanding into twenty-four library systems throughout Colorado. The overall goals of the project are:

- FFN caregivers in Colorado will have the skills, confidence and resources to engage the children in their care with early literacy materials and activities daily.
- Public library staff in Colorado will have strategies to connect FFN caregivers in their area with early literacy services.
- CSL will develop state-level infrastructure for early literacy support to FFN caregivers and the children in their care.
- Children under six throughout the state will be exposed to language and literacy-rich experiences in informal childcare settings and at the library.

The GRT grants have funded libraries small awards ($5,000 - $8,125); the grants support iterative development, partnerships & outreach key activities and require 20% of funds used for “give-away” materials for the community.

In 2019 the Colorado State Library created an Early Literacy Team of three regional specialists (funded by the Preschool Development Grant to extend Growing Readers Together). This team provided workshops and
consultations for 10 library systems, produced 10 webinars, and presented at the Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy conference and regional Youth Services Workshops. With the inclusion of Growing Readers Together in the 3-year renewal of Colorado’s Preschool Development Grant, the Early Literacy Team will continue to support libraries across the state in order to best support Colorado libraries’ early literacy and FFN service. Lastly, Joyce shared that as part of her role she facilitates the FFN Strategic Partnership Action Network which is an informal group that seeks to support FFN providers through collaborative leadership, tangible resources and/or advocacy.

**Discussion and Other Efforts to Support FFN:**
Anna Jo Haynes shared a summary of Governor Jared Polis’s talking points at the signing of two early childhood related bills; SB20-126: Allow Home Child Care In Homeowners’ Association Community and HB20-1347 Licensure Exemption For Family Child Care Homes.

The group shared other supports for FFN including PDG, EQIT and Early Childhood Councils work. The group discussed elevating FFN by embedding them in existing early childhood efforts and the significance of not distinguishing between licensed and unlicensed care when offering support and resources for providers. Lastly the group discussed how licensing rules & requirements can be a barrier for both FFN caregivers who want to become licensed care providers and those providers who are already licensed. The group noted the importance of ensuring that all places that children are being cared for are quality learning environments for all children.

**Public Comment and Member Updates**
Kristina Heyl shared that the Office of Early Childhood, in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, created a guide to support child care program’s response to COVID-19. The guide can be found on the Office of Early Childhood’s website.

Paula Schriefer announced that anyone interested in joining the Spring Institute’s ECE Stakeholder Group for Dual Language Learners to please contact: pschriefer@springinstitute.org or kamn@springinstitute.org.

**Next Steps and Adjourn**
Melissa Colsman thanked Letty Bass for her leadership and dedication as the PQA co-chair.

Melissa Colsman thanked everyone for participating and reminded everyone that the next Subcommittee meeting is on September 11, 2020.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:01 am.

*Note: Any presentation requested by the ECLC does not constitute or imply an endorsement of the product, process, service, or organization by the ECLC.*