

Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Update

December 2020



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Introduction

In December 2018, Colorado was awarded an Initial Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG) of \$5.8 million to support the state in analyzing the current landscape of the early care and learning mixed-delivery system and implement changes that maximize high-quality early care and education options for low-income families, improve the quality of care, streamline administrative infrastructure, and improve state-level early childhood care and education funding efficiencies.

In December 2019, Colorado was awarded a PDG Renewal of \$11,171,969 annually for three years (2020–2022). Renewal grant funds are used to implement activities identified in the [Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan](#). As part of the renewal grant, Colorado committed to an annual review and update to the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan to incorporate new findings from ongoing needs assessment activities, recommendations from the program evaluation and continuous quality improvement, and ongoing stakeholder feedback with an emphasis on families and caregivers of children birth through five.

To facilitate development of the recommended updates to the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan, the Colorado Department of Human Services contracted Marzano Research to conduct four primary activities: 1) develop a Landscape Analysis of current efforts related to the Strategic Plan, 2) engage a diverse group of stakeholders to inform the recommendations, especially families and caregivers of children birth through five, 3) facilitate a working group, and 4) prepare a set of recommended updates to the Strategic Plan for the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) to consider for endorsement. These four activities are further described in the following report.

Activity 1. Landscape Analysis

The purpose of the Landscape Analysis was to develop an inventory of organizations around the state of Colorado that are moving the Strategic Plan forward. To ensure representation from a diverse group of stakeholders, the Landscape Analysis data was collected via electronic survey.

Materials were prepared to further disseminate the survey via newsletters, email, and social media and shared with partners in the B-5 system, including:

- Colorado Shines Brighter website
- Colorado Shines Brighter distribution list
- Early Childhood Community Conversations facilitated by the Colorado Children’s Campaign
- Early Childhood Councils

- Early Childhood Leadership Commission distribution list
- Office of Early Childhood newsletter
- Colorado Department of Education P-3 Office
- Colorado Department of Human Services and other state agencies

The Landscape Analysis survey was open for one month. A total of 63 unique organizations representing 20 of 64 Colorado counties responded to the survey; however, most organizations serve the B-5 system statewide. The results of the Landscape Analysis were used to produce a documented inventory of the organizations that responded via a searchable Excel file. In the Excel file, users can find information on ages served, location, and strategies addressed. Complete results from the Landscape Analysis can be found on the [Colorado Shines Brighter](#) and [Early Childhood Leadership Commission](#) websites.

Results from the Landscape Analysis were shared with the ECLC's Program Quality and Alignment Subcommittee (PQAC) as well as the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Working Group to inform discussions that evaluated the efforts underway across the state related to the strategies.

Activity 2. Stakeholder Engagement

Marzano Research engaged a diverse group of stakeholders to provide input to inform the data collected for the Landscape Analysis as well as the recommended Strategic Plan updates.

First, the Marzano Research facilitators attended two PQAC meetings to engage members in data collection to inform the Landscape Analysis and to provide input on any recommended updates to the Strategic Plan strategies. The [PQAC members](#) also served a vital role in disseminating information related to the Landscape Analysis and Strategic Plan Update to the B-5 mixed-delivery system partners, including parents and families. Many PQAC members responded to the Landscape Analysis and shared the request through their networks. Additionally, PQAC members were invited to review the Landscape Analysis results in small groups and share ideas to support further implementation and coordination of the non-PDG-funded strategies. Appendix A presents a synthesis of the implementation and coordination-related input provided by PQAC members.

To ensure that updates to the Strategic Plan reflected input from families and caregivers, Marzano Research facilitators met with Needs Assessment and Evaluation teams from the Butler Institute at the University of Denver to review survey data from those constituencies. The Needs Assessment Team shared family and caregiver data aligned

with the Strategic Plan efforts, particularly data relating to Strategic Plan goal 3 (Maximize Family Knowledge, Engagement, and Support) and 4 (Meaningful and Equitable Access). These data were included in meetings with the Strategic Plan Working Group to inform discussions related to recommended strategy updates. Additionally, Marzano Research facilitators attended a meeting of the Family Voices Council to gather input related to access to child care, needed support services, and COVID-19 impacts on families and children. This input was also shared with the Strategic Plan Working Group to inform strategy updates.

Activity 3. Strategic Plan Working Group

The Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Working Group, which sits under the PQAC, was approved by the ECLC on April 23, 2020. The purpose of the Working Group is to identify and monitor activities that support strategies in the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan that are not funded through the Preschool Development Grant and to recommend changes to update the Strategic Plan based on the current early childhood environment, new findings from ongoing needs assessment activities, recommendations from the program evaluation and continuous quality improvement, and ongoing stakeholder feedback with an emphasis on families and caregivers of children birth through five. Table 1 presents the membership of the Working Group.

Table 1. Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan Working Group Members

Sector	Name	Organization
B-3/Infants and Toddlers	Amy Payton	Consultant
Business Supports	Hunter Railey	Small Business Majority
CDE P-3 Office	Megan Rogers	School Readiness Consultant
CDE P-3 Office	Rebecca Browning-Floyd	Regional Preschool Specialist
CDHS Office of Early Childhood	Lindsey Dorneman	Office of Early Childhood—Preschool Development Grant
Early Childhood Councils	Clea Willow	Bright Futures
Early Intervention	Amanda Pedrow	Rocky Mountain Human Services
ECLC	Jeff Kuhr	Mesa County Public Health
English Language Learners/Refugee or Immigrant Populations	Khatira Amn	The Spring Institute

Sector	Name	Organization
Family Providers	Roger Olson	Kid's Castle Inc.
Funders/Philanthropic Partners	Steffanie Clothier	Gary Community Investments
Governor's Office	Scott Groginsky	Governor's Office
Head Start	Tracey Lucero	Head Start and Migrant Head Start Program
Home Visitation	Lisa Hill	Invest in Kids
Homeless and Migrant Supports	Jenny Lerner	Colorado Department of Education
Licensed Child Care	Kristi Koltiksa	Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado
Mental Health	Dr. Jose Silva	Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health
Parents/Caregivers	Ealasha Vaughner	
Parents/Caregivers	Janelle Jenkins	
Physical Health and Wellness	Tracy Miller	Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
Public Preschool	Mat Aubuchon	Westminster Public Schools
Special Education	Dawn Klco	Salida School District
Workforce Development	Andrew Goff	Colorado Northwestern Community College

The Working Group was convened for two meetings. The purpose of meeting 1 was to engage the working members in the evaluation of the non-PDG strategies to identify possible updates. In small groups, the members engaged in a review of data from the Landscape Analysis and other available data along with their collective experience to assess progress toward meeting the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan. As a follow-up to the meeting, additional feedback was solicited from members via a survey. The survey asked members to provide input on updates to the non-PDG-funded strategies as well as any missing strategies under each of the six goals. Members also had the opportunity to provide ideas for further coordination and implementation of the strategies (see Appendix A for a synthesis of these ideas). A total of 15 members responded to the survey for a 68 percent response rate. Eleven percent of the responses indicated some amendment was needed to update the strategies, while 68 percent recommended no change across strategies (Figure 1). Only 6 percent of respondents suggested that strategies were missing across the goals.

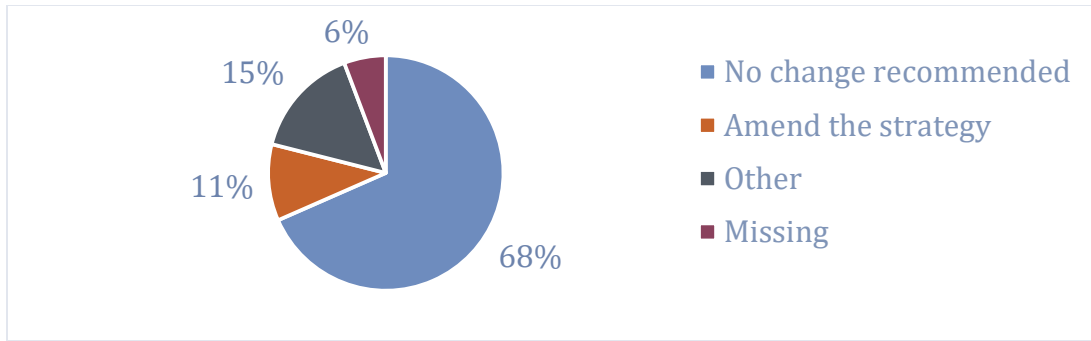




Figure 1. Working Group Recommendations Across Strategies (n = 15)







The Working Group met a second time to review the survey results and further process recommended updates to the non-PDG-funded strategies. In small groups, the members reviewed proposed updates to the non-PDG-funded strategies based on the survey results, conversations from meeting 1, and PQAC input. As a follow-up to the meeting, the members received a final set of draft recommended updates electronically for review. All members who responded to the final review email agreed that the recommended updates were responsive to the Working Group input. The final set of recommended updates is presented in the next section in Tables 2 and 3.





Activity 4. Recommended Updates to the Strategic Plan







The CSB Strategic Plan currently includes 56 strategies. Thirty-five of the strategies are funded under the Preschool Development Renewal Grant as noted by the  symbol. The remaining 21 need to be implemented in partnership with the ECLC and other state and local organizations, noted by the  symbol. The [Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan](#) can be referenced for the complete set of current strategies.







Recommended updates to the strategies were informed by 1) data from the Landscape Analysis, 2) ongoing needs assessment activities, 3) current early childhood environment, and 4) a response to continuous quality improvement. Of the 56 strategies, 4 PDG-funded and 16 non-PDG-funded strategies are recommended for update. Thirty-six strategies remain unchanged in the Strategic Plan. The proposed updates to existing strategies are presented in Table 2, followed by recommendations for the addition of three new strategies in Table 3. A summary of why the update is recommended is also provided for each strategy.







Table 2. Original and Recommended Updates to the Strategic Plan Strategies







Original Strategy	Recommended Update
 1.1.5 Explore barriers and strategies to implementing a unique child identifier (per Colorado House Bill 08-1364) to enable data informed decisions concerning child outcomes. Utilize the upcoming school readiness data pilot program with local school districts to explore existing or needed technologies and data sharing agreements and unique child identifier implementation challenges.	 1.1.5 Accelerate strategies to implement a unique child identifier (per Colorado House Bill 08-1364) to enable data-informed decisions concerning child outcomes. Coordinate across early childhood settings to explore existing or needed technologies and data-sharing agreements and unique child identifier implementation challenges.
<p>Summary of the update—Changes were made to directly address the comments to amend the strategy. The language to “explore barriers” was removed, as several comments noted that barriers are already known. To make the strategy more inclusive, “coordinate across early childhood settings” was added. The “school readiness data pilot program” was removed so as not to limit when and how the exploration of needed technologies and data-sharing agreements could be explored.</p>	
 1.1.6 Identify current and new opportunities to better support the broader early childhood workforce including home visitors, coaches, child health consultants, and mental health consultants.	 1.1.6 Improve efforts to recruit and retain a quality early childhood workforce, including home visitors, coaches, child health consultants, social workers, early intervention specialists, and early childhood mental health consultants. Ensure efforts are founded on diversity, equity and inclusivity and help to define professions within the sector.
<p>Summary of the update—Additional specificity was added to the language to address input on the need to not just support but also recruit and retain. The word “support” is vague and it was replaced with additional language to explicitly emphasize professionalism and added diversity, equity, and inclusion for ECE professionals. Additional early childhood personnel were added to further expand the “broader workforce” that is called out.</p>	
 1.2.2 Develop a Medicaid billing process manual for Healthy Steps, Early	 1.2.2 Develop and make updates to Medicaid billing process manuals for Child

Original Strategy	Recommended Update
<p>Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC), and home visiting programs. Provide training and technical assistance to support utilization.</p>	<p>First, Healthy Steps, Early Intervention Colorado, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC), Nurse-Family Partnership, and SafeCare Colorado and other state funded home visiting programs. Provide training and technical assistance to support utilization.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—The Advancing Medicaid in Early Childhood project led by HCPF is intended to expand access to Medicaid for children up to age three. Through the Working Group directing this project, the Child First and SafeCare Colorado programs were identified as additional programs to add to the strategy that qualify for Medicaid billing. The working group also identified updates to existing Medicaid billing manuals for Early Intervention Colorado and the Nurse-Family Partnership.</p>	
<p> 1.2.3 Promote integrated and preventative maternal and child physical, behavioral, oral, and environmental health services. Explore current models including Head Start and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s (CDPHE) maternal and child health priorities such as increasing prosocial connection and social emotional well-being.</p>	<p> 1.2.3 Promote integrated preventative maternal and child physical, behavioral, oral, and environmental health services that are culturally responsive. Explore current models including Head Start and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s (CDPHE) maternal and child health priorities such as increasing prosocial connection and social-emotional well-being.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—The change made was to further promote culturally responsive approaches to preventative maternal and child health based on comments. Other comments provided were related to implementation of actions under the strategy.</p>	
<p> 1.2.6 Enhance ongoing coordination and collaboration across state agencies including CDHS, CDPHE, Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF). Identify opportunities to address systems and administrative barriers.</p>	<p> 1.2.6 Expand ongoing coordination and collaboration across state agencies including CDHS, CDPHE, Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), and Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to improve child and family outcomes. Identify opportunities to address</p>

Original Strategy	Recommended Update
	systems and administrative barriers.
<p>Summary of the update—“Enhance” was changed to “expand” in order to acknowledge the coordination and collaboration that is occurring already among agencies. Additionally, CDHE was added as another collaborative agency and a focus for coordination and collaboration to “improve child and family outcomes.”</p>	
 <p>2.2.1 Coordinate with CDHS, CDPHE and CDE to increase ECE provider participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the National School Lunch Program.</p>	 <p>2.2.1 Coordinate with CDHS, CDPHE, and CDE to increase ECE provider participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch Program, and the School Breakfast Program.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—The “School Breakfast Program” was added to this strategy as a result of input from CDE partners that it should be included because of its alignment with the other programs. The addition of the program increases efficiency in service delivery and is a response to continuous quality improvement.</p>	
 <p>3.1.7 Explore family opinions and decision-making in the mixed-delivery system, including the influence of Colorado Shines ratings on provider selection and considerations of reputation, cost, and teacher qualifications.</p>	 <p>3.1.7 Increase shared decision-making with families in the mixed-delivery system, incorporating family opinions, Colorado Shines ratings, and considerations of reputation, cost, and teacher qualifications on provider selection.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—To reflect Working Group input, “explore” was changed to “increase” to be more action oriented and reflect the desire to call out the importance more explicitly of including families in shared decision-making.</p>	
 <p>3.2.1 The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) will consider a leadership role for specific strategies and incorporate input from families and early childhood professionals.</p>	 <p>3.2.1 The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) will identify a leadership role for specific strategies and ensure voices from families and providers representing diverse races, ethnicities, languages spoken, and geographic regions are included.</p>
<p>Summary of the update—More explicit language regarding the role of the ECLC to “identify” leadership roles for strategies and ensure inclusion of families and providers of</p>	

Original Strategy	Recommended Update
color and diverse geographic locales was included.	
 3.3.2 Build capacity of local ECCs to engage family leaders, including consultation and engagement with local FRCs and Head Start programs to ensure families are empowered to become community leaders.	 3.3.2 Build capacity and identify points of collaboration with community-based organizations and ECCs to engage family leaders, including consultation and engagement with local FRCs and Head Start programs, state-funded preschool, and school districts to ensure families are empowered to become community leaders.
<p>Summary of the update—The strategy was amended to acknowledge the important role of community-based organizations in the system. Additionally, state-funded preschool and school districts were added to the list of collaborators to support family engagement. Other comments related to this strategy were more focused on implementation of actions.</p>	
 4.1.1 Increase the availability of developmental screenings and referral processes in appropriate settings where children are served.	 4.1.1 Increase the availability of developmental screenings and referral processes in appropriate settings where children are served. Explore ways to ensure continuity of services once referrals are made and accessibility for all children and families regardless of systematic barriers.
<p>Summary of the update—To reflect the importance of continuity of services once a referral is made, additional language was added to support the system to not just increase screenings and referrals but to ensure services are available to support children and families once a referral is made. Additional suggested changes through the entire goal 4 strategies were to emphasize equity and access to children and families of color.</p>	
 4.1.2 Increase the ability of ECE professionals and programs to care for and educate children with developmental delays or disabilities and to connect families to supportive services. Provide ECE micro-grants to purchase adaptive materials or make facility changes to support greater	 4.1.2 Increase the ability of ECE professionals and programs to care for and educate all children by providing coaching, training, and materials focused on universal design and inclusion.

Original Strategy	Recommended Update
inclusivity.	
<p>Summary of the update—The update to the strategy builds on existing support from the Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering at UC Denver to provide coaching, training, and materials to increase ECE professionals’ abilities to care for all children. In lieu of one-time micro-grants, these investments have demonstrated increased effectiveness and better opportunities for sustainability of the strategy.</p>	
 4.1.4 Explore opportunities to increase access to a system of mixed-delivery ECE programs with an emphasis on serving infants and toddlers.	 4.1.4 Explore opportunities to increase and ensure equitable access to a system of mixed-delivery ECE programs with an emphasis on serving infants and toddlers.
<p>Summary of the update—Stakeholder input did not reflect the need for specific changes to this strategy, other than adding language to emphasize equity and access to children and families of color. Other comments on this strategy were more related to action steps to implement it.</p>	
 4.1.6 Explore the potential for CDHS, ECCs, local regulatory entities, the Office of Economic Development, and professional associations to cross-train on ECE regulatory and policy changes.	 4.1.6 Explore the potential for CDHS, CDE, ECCs, school districts, local regulatory entities, the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), and professional associations to cross-train on ECE regulatory and policy changes to improve equitable access to services.
<p>Summary of the update—Changes reflect comments on the impact of preschool regulations on school-based services and the need to engage school districts at the local level. Additional language to improve coordination and communication between CDE and CDHS on this topic was also added to reflect the comments citing the critical role the state agencies play to ensure this happens effectively. Other comments related to implementation of this strategy.</p>	
 4.1.7 Engage and equip local and state business leaders and business support organizations with the resources and knowledge they need to support the availability of, and access to, ECE programs through public-private	 4.1.7 Engage and equip local and state business leaders and business support organizations with the resources and knowledge they need to support the availability of, and equitable access to, ECE programs through public-private partnerships.




Original Strategy	Recommended Update
partnerships.	
<p>Summary of the update—Stakeholder input did not reflect the need for specific changes to this strategy beyond adding more focus on equity. Comments on this strategy were more related to action steps to implement this strategy.</p>	
 4.2.2 Expand and enhance affordable pre-kindergarten options for all Colorado 4-year-olds.	 4.2.2 Implement a mixed-delivery high-quality universal preschool program for all Colorado four-year-olds that is coordinated with existing early childhood care and education programs.
<p>Summary of the update—Changes were made to recognize policy changes related to implementation of universal preschool and the need to coordinate with system partners to provide care beyond the 10 hours per week that universal preschool will provide.</p>	
 4.2.3 Analyze eligibility and family income thresholds across multiple early childhood and family support programs to provide more consistent, equitable access.	 4.2.3 Analyze eligibility and family income thresholds across multiple early childhood and family support programs to reduce administrative burden and increase consistent and equitable access.
<p>Summary of the update—The change reflects input that individuals seeking assistance encounter administrative burdens that deter them from accessing support programs.</p>	
 5.1.1 Explore challenges to ECE program pre-licensing and start-up activities, and investigate how business consultants/navigators could support start-ups through technical assistance on launching and sustaining a financially sound ECE program with livable wages.	 5.1.1 Explore challenges to ECE program pre-licensing and start-up activities, including license-exempt ECE providers, such as FFN, and investigate how business consultants/navigators could support through technical assistance on launching and sustaining a financially sound, licensed ECE program with livable wages.
<p>Summary of the update—Family, friends, and neighbors (FFN) were added to more explicitly call out the importance in supporting unlicensed providers such as FFN as start-up businesses because they play a key role in providing care for many families and children in Colorado.</p>	

Original Strategy	Recommended Update
 5.1.6 Study the effect of local regulations on the availability of infant and toddler child care, and family child care homes, including minimum wage thresholds.	 5.1.6 Study the effect of local regulations on the availability of infant and toddler child care and family child care homes. Identify regulations that might cause barriers to increase the availability of infant and toddler care.
<p>Summary of the update—Changes were made to more broadly identify conflicting regulations that might serve as barriers to implementing infant and toddler care, removing references to any specific barrier. Additional comments on this strategy were related to action steps to implement this strategy.</p>	
 6.2.4 Explore reciprocity in credentials and licensure across states (starting with Region VIII) and countries (starting with countries with the highest migration to Colorado), and provide supports for review of transcripts and other approval processes.	 6.2.4 Consider developing a framework to explore reciprocity in credentials and licensure across states (starting with Region VIII) and countries (starting with countries with the highest migration to Colorado), and provide supports for review of transcripts and other approval processes.
<p>Summary of the update—The change reflects comments to move beyond exploring reciprocity to developing a framework to support the efforts to implement this strategy. The intent of this change is to streamline a process for determining reciprocity from other jurisdictions so that the onus does not fall on Colorado to predetermine reciprocity with every other licensing jurisdiction.</p>	
 6.2.6 Enhance and align the roles of consultative support professionals. Train consultative support professionals to help providers make referral determination concerning IDEA Part C or Part B Section-619, early childhood mental health services, and other supports.	 6.1.5 Explore the development of local communities of practice to help formal (licensed) ECE providers adopt inclusive practices and connect to early childhood mental health services and other resources in their community.
<p>Summary of the update—In response to continuous quality improvement and to increase efficiency, the recommended updates recognize the efficiencies to be gained by leveraging current referral partners such as CCBs to be a resource for ECE providers. Furthermore, it is recommended that this strategy move under objective 6.1, as the outcome is more focused on quality environments than workforce development and</p>	

Original Strategy	Recommended Update
retention.	

Below we present three potential new strategies that arose from the Working Group input and the need for continuous quality improvement.

Table 3. Recommended New Strategies

New Strategy	Rationale
 <p>1.2.7 Support school district implementation of systemic coordination with community based ECE programs to improve children’s transitions to kindergarten (and early elementary school grades).</p>	<p>A strategy to explicitly support children’s transition from preschool to kindergarten (and early elementary school grades) is needed under Goal 1, as Colorado prepares to implement universal preschool and because COVID has disrupted normal learning services for preschoolers. Effective coordination between preschool settings and school districts requires transition agreements to include, at a minimum, coordination plans and policies on children’s records, parent-teacher communication, and teacher professional development.</p>
 <p>2.2.3 Increase physical activity in ECE settings.</p>	<p>Objective 2.2 is to promote strong relationships, social and emotional development, appropriate nutrition, and physical activity. Currently this objective lacks a strategy that addresses physical activity. Building in a strategy focused on physical activity will help support the objective overall.</p>
 <p>4.1.8 Develop a model of direct service, care coordination, and parenting support to connect families of children up to age three who do not meet eligibility for IDEA Part C Early Intervention to programs and services that can address children's developmental needs.</p>	<p>In 2020, the state budget deficit resulted in a reduction in state funds for the Early Intervention Colorado (EI) program (IDEA Part C). To flatten caseload and reduce future intake, the definition for EI eligibility changed in state rule. Previously, children were eligible for service if they demonstrated a 25 percent or higher delay in one or more developmental domains. The new definition requires a 33 percent or higher delay in one or more domain. To ensure children who would have previously been eligible for EI can access needed supports, the state proposed a new</p>

New Strategy	Rationale
	<p>definition, “risk factor,” meaning a 25 percent delay in two or more domains and, if sufficient appropriations are available, a 25 percent delay in one domain, or other factors determined by the department to have research that supports the potential for impact on development at a later age. Under new state rules, children eligible under the “risk factor” definition may receive services through “Early Intervention Early Start,” a program separate from early intervention services provided in accordance with IDEA Part C.</p>

Conclusion

This report presents a set of recommended updates to the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan for the Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood Preschool Development Grant Executive Steering Committee and the Early Childhood Leadership Commission to consider for endorsement. The recommendations are the result of findings from the Landscape Analysis, ongoing needs assessment data, stakeholder feedback, and the need for continuous quality improvement. The Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan will be reviewed and updated as needed annually during the renewal grant to incorporate new findings from ongoing needs assessment activities, recommendations from the program evaluation and continuous quality improvement, and ongoing stakeholder feedback with an emphasis on families and caregivers of children birth through five.

Appendix A: Synthesis of Implementation Feedback

The following synthesis represents the input gathered from the PQAC and Strategic Plan Working Group members related to implementation and coordination of the non-PDG-funded strategies. This information can be used by the ECLC and PQAC to support continued implementation of the strategies. Feedback is synthesized for the entire goal except when a specific strategy was referenced by stakeholders.

Goal 1: Align and Coordinate Systems

- 1.1.5—Understand how efforts are working toward this strategy, set benchmarks for child outcomes, and address barriers such as children moving across districts. Work with CDE to assign SASID numbers to all children, as this would correspond with the number they receive in kindergarten (or preschool depending on the district). Using the SASID would allow review of outcomes from the time the number was assigned through 12th grade.
- 1.1.6—Include full workforce (centers, homes, families, others offering care/preschool). Draw on Head Start and ECCs as resources and consider what funding is needed to assist with this work. Ensure mandatory, quarterly trainings/reflections and assessments focused on biases and cultural competencies.
- 1.2.3—Engage ECCs in this effort. Add dedicated research to mothers and babies of color so relevant assessments and scales can be created.
- 1.2.6—Engage Head Start in this work. Head Start programs are essential to supporting high-quality, comprehensive services for children from low-income families, including cross-systems, coordinated efforts in preschool, home visiting, child welfare, maternal and child health, and Medicaid connections. The system should be driven by the work to improve outcomes. Consider having shared goals across agencies and clarity around who is responsible for which components. Accountability more than coordination.

Goal 3: Maximize Family Knowledge Engagement and Support

- Local and state public health, as well as Head Start, were missing from some of the strategies. Ensure ECCs and FRCs are also engaged in this work.
- There is a need to clarify outcomes that we are trying to achieve and be able to articulate the importance of data collection to inform and advance those outcomes.
- Make sure we are hearing from families and diverse populations.
- Recognize that organizations are doing a lot of different things (especially now) to meet families' needs; we need to support and fund programs (possibly look to federal funding opportunities as well).
- Develop/adopt a set of “quality standards” related to parent engagement so that parents/families can be ensured that they have equitable experiences no matter

where they live in Colorado. These standards already exist (for example in Screening and Referral Quality Standards).

Goal 4: Meaningful and Equitable Access

- 4.1.4—The impacts of universal preschool, and specifically the state’s policies on ensuring mixed delivery for four-year-old children under this new system, will be critical to increasing infant/toddler ECE programs. Second, it is essential that the state develop a comprehensive statewide policy and fiscal plan to provide quality ECE to infants/toddlers. Third, the state should work closely with Early Head Start programs to inform our work on quality, comprehensive services, including drawing on and potentially expanding Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.
- 4.1.7—Engage EPIC, the Downtown Denver Partnership, and other economic development specialists to move this forward.
- 4.2.2—Engage in the universal preschool planning processes and specifically how to fill gaps beyond the 10 hours/week that Prop EE pays for. Coordinate with CDE to learn about service delivery for state-funded preschool students, to understand the elements of program quality that need to be in place.
- 4.2.3—Communicate about how we can help individuals reaching out for assistance who have unfortunately fallen on hard times.
- There needs to be a plan to coordinate more specifically around the strategies.
- Who is the champion of the strategies? Do we need more monitoring or oversight of the non-PDG-funded strategies if they are indeed priorities?
- ECCs are doing a lot of work in these areas; important to share and build on their expertise.
- Explore ways of involving graduate-level interns to help mixed-delivery systems to provide such services while students earn credit and exposure to work in the ECE field.

Goal 5: Strengthen Business Practices

- 5.1.3 —The fact that there was only one entry in the Landscape Analysis for this strategy is an indication of a potential gap in implementation.
- 5.1.6—Coordinate with the CDHS regulatory review process and with family child care home advocates and providers looking at the impacts of state and local regulations.
- Important to give meaning to words (such as mixed-delivery system) for consistency across the plan.
- Strategies are around solutions, but there may be other challenges we haven’t yet identified that could be addressed in the future.

Goal 6: Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education Environments and the Workforce

- 6.2.4—There is a lot of work happening in the space with universities, community colleges, and early childhood councils; important to align and build off existing work.
- Consider flipping the goal: Rather than creating a crosswalk to every state and country, develop a framework for people to compare their previous work experience with Colorado’s preferred proficiencies.
- Important to align with HB20-1053, which required alignment and coordination of pathways to promote recruitment and retention in the field.
- Ongoing work to understand compensation needs in the state, which will be important to consider and build on in the future.
- Draw on PD that’s already been developed in others states rather than developing all our own content. Reduce duplication so that ECE workforce is one system.
- Explore ways of ensuring quick and quality background checks that are transferable between licensed providers to remove timely and expensive barriers to getting qualified quality staff into the classrooms (see state processes such as those in Arizona for example).
- Focus on specific populations within the workforce that are typically left behind due to systemic barriers related to race and ethnicity. If this plan is prioritizing equity, language to indicate this, and equity for whom, would articulate those goals through these strategy statements.
- Require a CDE certificate for teaching in public preschools. Teachers should be called teachers, not child care workers; change language across organizations to be consistent.



Marzano Research is a woman-owned small business dedicated to working with educators and system leaders to learn, evolve, and thrive. We work with organizations of every size, background, and need—individual schools and districts, community organizations, nonprofits, state education agencies, and the federal government. With practitioner-centered, evidence-Informed research, consulting, and technical assistance, we meet our clients in their unique context and work with their existing capacities to create actionable solutions for their pressing priorities. We proudly serve seven states in the central region through the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Central, one of 10 RELs in the U.S. funded by the Institute of Education Sciences. As a certified benefit corporation, we believe in using business as a force for good and are committed to creating positive impact and sustainability—for the good of employees, clients/stakeholders, our community, and the environment. For more Information, please visit www.MarzanoResearch.com.

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