



**TRANSITION  
ADVISORY  
GROUP**

**Welcome**

# Agenda

- Welcome
- Voices from the Field
- Logistics
- Review charge
- Update from subgroups
- Complete program review, including Special Education
- Discuss governance of new department
- Discuss local structures and partnerships, including technology needed for blending/braiding funding
- Next steps
- Public comment

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## **Voices from the Field**

**Alexa Chenowith  
Parent Voice for the Home  
Visiting Implementation Task  
Force**

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**Logistics**

# Meeting Norms

- Come prepared.
- Mute yourself when not speaking.
- Stay engaged (e.g., actively participate and use the chat function).
- Be mindful of how much “air time” each member receives.
- Always assume good intent.
- All ideas are valued.
- Center equity in all conversations.

# Expectations

**Every meeting you should expect the following:**

- **Via e-mail:**
  - Agenda for meeting
  - Suggested pre-reading
  
- **In meeting:**
  - Subgroup updates
  - Background information
  - Focused discussion around a specific part of the transition plan
  - Closing/next steps

# TAG Meeting Schedule

Meetings will take place on Wednesdays from 3–5:30pm MST

| Meeting Dates*       | Key Focus Areas   |
|----------------------|---|
| <del>July 14</del>   | -Kick-off meeting : Introductions and mission/vision discussion   |
| <del>August 4</del>  | -Movement of programs to new department<br>-Department structure & timeline of move   |
| <del>August 25</del> | -Revisit program movement, funding & timeline<br>-Discussion: local structures & partnerships   |
| <b>September 15</b>  | -Complete program review, including Special Education<br>-Governance of DEC<br>-Local structures & partnerships<br>-Technology and blending/braiding funds to support unification |
| <b>September 22*</b> | -Revisit discussion on local structures & partnerships<br>-Revisit discussion of technology and blending/braiding funding   |
| <b>October 20</b>    | -Review transition plan draft<br>-Universal, voluntary preschool implementation   |
| <b>November 17</b>   | -Universal, voluntary preschool implementation to support most vulnerable populations and mixed delivery  |
| <b>December 15</b>   | -Additional topics regarding universal, voluntary preschool   |

\*Note: Sept 22 has been newly added.

# Feedback Form Responses

## A reminder about the Feedback Form [responses](#):

- The responses are all shared publicly on the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) website removing all identifying information
- TAG members should review the responses in the feedback form before every meeting
- These responses are valuable input for this stakeholder engagement process





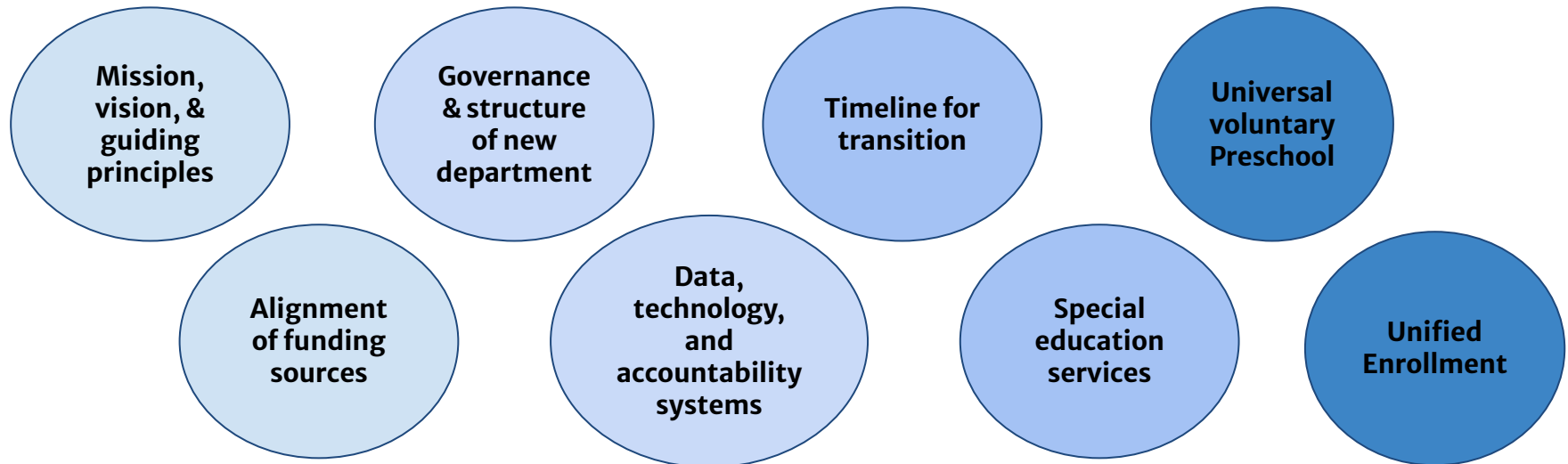
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**Review Charge**

# TAG Charge

Over the coming months, TAG will convene to discuss ideas and recommendations for the transition plan to offer to the TWG, taking into consideration the work done in the topic subgroups, focus groups, town halls, and all other stakeholder engagement structures.

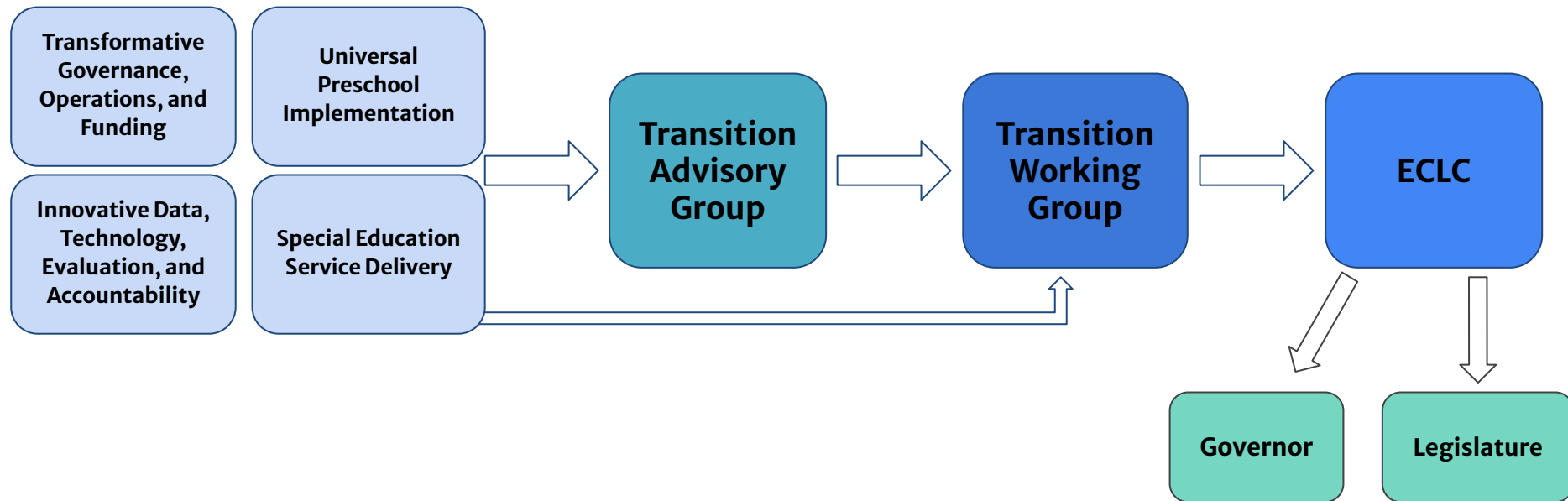
## Themes to be considered:



*This will help render a plan for the new department and implementation of the new statewide, universal, voluntary preschool program that is robust, comprehensive, and centered on the children and families of Colorado.*

# Subgroup Structure

The ECLC Transition Advisory Group is convening subgroups to offer insights that will guide the creation of a transition plan for the new unified Department of Early Childhood. Each group will offer recommendations from their perspectives or in their areas of expertise.



# TWG Charge

House Bill 21-1304 created the TWG, which will develop a transition plan and recommendations for a new statewide, universal, voluntary preschool program, working with a consultant and the advice of the TAG. The plan must address:

- Mission and vision, guiding values, and principles
- Governance and structure of new department
- Fiscal Structure for the new department & services provided & programs administered including administration and operations
- Timeline for completing key transition activities for the new dept., including moving services & programs from existing dept to new dept and considerations for a phased transition approach to ensure ongoing alignment
- Aligning and combining funding sources for early childhood (taking previous local efforts for streamlining into account)
- Technology required to achieve goals to support parents/caregivers to identify local, appropriate, and available early childhood program and service options and support unification
- Early childhood data systems strategies to inform planning, leverage resource, allocations, maximize children's access to programs, & support data-driven decision-making

***Additional strategies to support:*** reducing overregulation, early childhood and early elementary alignment, alignment with child welfare system and child maltreatment prevention, alignment with existing departments, alignment with multi-generation strategies to support families, coordination and collaboration with programs that are not moved to the new department, robust stakeholder engagement strategies that include parents, and education and training related to trauma informed approaches to early childhood.

# Guiding Principles



# Mission and Vision

## Vision

All Colorado children, families and early childhood professionals are valued, healthy and thriving.

## Mission

The Colorado Department of Early Childhood champions a comprehensive, community-informed, effective, high quality and equitable early childhood system that supports the care, education and well-being of all Colorado's young children, their families and early childhood professionals in all settings.

## Values

- We value equity across the early childhood system and are committed to utilizing an equity-focused lens to drive priorities and decision making.
- We believe that formal and informal care environments can provide high quality, developmentally appropriate care and learning.
- We respect and appreciate the diversity and strengths of all of our communities in Colorado.
- We believe that accessibility to early childhood services considers affordability, cultural responsiveness, and parent choice.
- We value an innovative and expansive approach to our early childhood system.
- We value a whole family approach.

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**Key Themes from Ongoing  
Conversations**

# Subgroup Meetings Update

## Data, Technology, Evaluation & Accountability

### Week 5: Supports for Enrollment across EC System

- Discussed the existing systems that support enrollment of child care, preschool and other early childhood services
- Leverage technology to support both family and provider enrollment experiences, thinking critically about usability and accessibility from the beginning
- Communication and collaboration across state and local partners will be very important

### Week 6: Current & ideal state agency data systems

- Presentations from Colorado Dept of Education, Colorado Dept of Public Health & Environment, and Colorado Dept of Human Services on current data systems
- First identify the outcomes we want to achieve and then build a system that measures that
- Challenges: lack of consistent identifier across programs and services; funding (initial and ongoing); retaining institutional knowledge from state staff

## Special Education Service Delivery

### Week 5: Local Service Delivery

- Local communities build systems of community based organizations (CBOs) and local education agencies (LEAs) to deliver services to children and families
- Based on learning to date – shared considerations for where programs should be locate:
  - Part B (preschool special education): remain at Colorado Dept of Education
  - Part C (early intervention): move to new Dept of Early Childhood, aligned with other early childhood programs
  - Continued coordination is needed to align and enhance access and delivery of services

### Week 6: Roles and Responsibilities of CDE and DEC

- Assuming the programs are located as above:
  - Accountability and interagency agreements between DEC and CDE
  - Avoid siloing; work to address gaps and align services between and across programs
  - Need to develop a shared understanding of “mixed delivery”



# Subgroup Meetings Update

## Governance, Operations & Funding

### **Week 5: Ideal Enrollment Processes for Families and Providers**

- Centralized way for families to easily understand what services are available to them
- Opportunities to leverage technology to ease burdens on families accessing and sharing information
- Streamlined system for providers related to paperwork, reporting, funding, eligibility, and ability to easily connect families to other services

### **Week 6: Coordination across Departments and Strategies to incorporate Family Voices**

- Ensure inter- and intra-agency coordination to prevent silos and enhance communication and alignment across programs
- Ensure department leadership values and institutes ongoing opportunities for stakeholder engagement
- Establish ongoing mechanisms that reach families where they are / use technology to allow for continuous feedback opportunities

## Universal Preschool Implementation

### **Week 5: Ideal Mixed Delivery System**

- Develop comprehensive policies, standards, and accountability measures
- Ensure family choice
- Utilize technology to support universal enrollment and streamlined systems for providers

### **Week 6: Strategies to ensure adequate staffing and facilities to support UPK**

- Compensation, access to affordable professional development, and overall well-being of providers as a priority
- Utilize cost of care models for reimbursements, that allow for facility and maintenance costs
- Consider incentives for businesses, churches, property owners, higher education, etc to provide space for care

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**Final Review: Program  
Movement**

# Review of Engagement

Since the passage of HB21-1304 in June, stakeholders from the early childhood community have engaged in discussions about the creation of the new Department of Early Childhood, including what programs will be moved. These conversations have occurred in each group named in the legislation:

- **Subgroups**
  - Every subgroup has discussed program movement in relation to their charge, with the governance and special education subgroups tackling it in significant detail (e.g., governance outlined the pros and cons of each program under consideration).
- **TAG**
  - TAG has discussed program movement in prior meetings, with additional feedback collected from TAG members in follow up surveys.
- **ECLC**
  - The ECLC discussed program movement in their meeting on August 26. Additionally, various ECLC subcommittees and members have further engaged with this topic in other meetings.
  - A feedback form on the ECLC website has continuously collected comments and concerns throughout the entire process.
- **TWG**
  - TWG has received, considered, and debated stakeholder feedback ongoing.

Additionally, agency staff most familiar with programs and funding have participated in the above conversations as well as provided context and feedback in other settings.

# Considerations for Program Movement

HB21-1304 created DEC to ensure Colorado can improve outcomes for all children, fully implement the new preschool program, and effectively support all Colorado families to access voluntary, high quality child care and education.

To execute this legislative charge, the following criteria were taken into account, when considering which programs should move to DEC:

- The alignment of the program's purpose to the mission, vision, values, and guiding principles of DEC;
- The importance of aligning the current early childhood system with the new voluntary, statewide preschool program;
- The efficiencies and reduction of duplicative oversight implied by unifying programs;
- Federal limitations to the movement of the programs (e.g., CACFP, WIC, & IDEA, Part B); and
- The previous planning, engagement, and alignment work done in the creation of OEC.

# RECOMMENDATION REGARDING PART B AND PART C SERVICE DELIVERY

## **Draft** recommendations from TWG based on feedback from special education subgroup:

### **Overall:**

- Continue to work toward a system where special education services are delivered for children birth through age 5 in a mixed delivery system that meaningfully includes community-based settings, at the location of family choice, consistent with Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), that is child centered and responsive to family needs.

### **Part B 619:**

- Authority remains under the purview of Colorado Department of Education, to be reviewed in no more than 3 years

### **Part C:**

- As part of the Office of Early Childhood, Part C Early Intervention moves to the Department of Early Childhood

### **Ongoing Coordination, Alignment and Professional Development**

- Enhanced, coordinated, and aligned state support for programs in a mixed delivery system
- Develop MOUs or inter-agency agreements to ensure ongoing coordination at the state system and local levels (for Part B, 619 and between Part C & Part B)
- Encourage agreements with community-based organizations to provide special education services
- Set a timeline to review / evaluate service delivery, partnerships, and outcomes for kids and families
- Re-evaluate where programs are located, within no more than 3 years of operation of the new department
- Provide professional development for workforce - across the early childhood system
- Collectively work to address divisive culture between and across the B-5 early care and education system, including special education
- Continue to center on families and children's experiences

# Final Consideration of Program Movement

After reviewing stakeholder feedback, this is the **draft** TWG recommendation of programs to move:

- Colorado Preschool Program (CPP)
- EC Workforce Development Team\*
- All programs/systems currently housed at OEC, including IDEA Part C

Child Care Attendance Tracking System  
Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)  
Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)  
Early Childhood Councils & CCR&Rs  
Expanding Quality in Infant & Toddler Care Initiative  
Early Childhood Workforce & Professional Development (PDIS)  
Child Abuse Prevention Trust Fund  
Colorado Community Response  
Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program  
Early Childhood Mental Health

Early Intervention (IDEA, Part C)  
Family Resource Centers  
Fatherhood Program  
Head Start Collab Office  
Home Visiting Programs (e.g., NFP, SafeCare, PAT, Healthy Steps, Child First, HIPPPY)  
Incredible Years  
Promoting Safe and Stable Families  
Background Investigation Unit  
Child Care Licensing

*Based on the feedback from the Special Education subgroup, TWG has offered a draft recommendation that Part C move to DEC while Part B 619 remain housed at CDE to be reviewed by July 2025.*

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Please fill out the following [form](#) to capture final considerations  
\*Pending further agency conversation

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**Discussion: Governance of  
Department of Early Childhood**

# Governance of DEC

House Bill 21-1304 requires recommendations on the governance of DEC. Subgroups identified the following themes regarding the new department's governance:

| Working Well   | Needs Improvement   | New Ideas that should be considered  |
|--|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family Engagement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDHS Family Voice Council</li> <li>• Providing stipends when feasible for parents/families who are willing to join councils and provide meaningful feedback</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Alignment and communication with K-12/school districts               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDE – P-3 Office</li> <li>• School District Preschool Advisory Council Members</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Attention to 2-gen/Whole-child approaches</li> <li>4. ECLC leadership functions well and serves as a central point for budget and policy</li> <li>5. Continued focus on equity and reaching under-resourced communities</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. State and county programs should be easier for families, providers, and all stakeholders to navigate/know if they are eligible – contracts, invoicing etc., should be streamlined.</li> <li>2. Councils and local level support varies in staffing, funding, size etc. – families should get the same support in every county</li> <li>3. Tension between local control and a statewide system – will need to find a balance</li> <li>4. All state organizations and boards should have a stronger awareness of preschool structures, programs, and quality measures</li> <li>5. Silo-ing and exclusion among Councils, districts, and community providers</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focusing on family choice and bringing in FFN to universal preschool to support culturally responsive learning</li> <li>2. Increased language diversity embedded in the governance structure – expanded to more than just English and Spanish</li> <li>3. Evaluating the contracting for licensing and whether subcontracting should continue or shift</li> <li>4. Is a rule-making board necessary – could ECLC fill this role?</li> <li>5. More equitable resource distribution – whether with a more statewide system or ensuring that governance structure creates statewide equity</li> </ol> |



# Discussion: Governance of DEC

## What considerations should TWG take into account when determining how the new department should be governed?

- What will the new department need from its governance structure in order to successfully carry out its mission?
- How can the rulemaking process ensure that the Executive Director is advised by a diverse group of stakeholders?
- How can we get better and more representative engagement in Public Comments?
- What should ECLC's role be in the new department?

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## **Discussion: Local Structures and Partnerships**

*Review from last TAG*

# TAG Charge

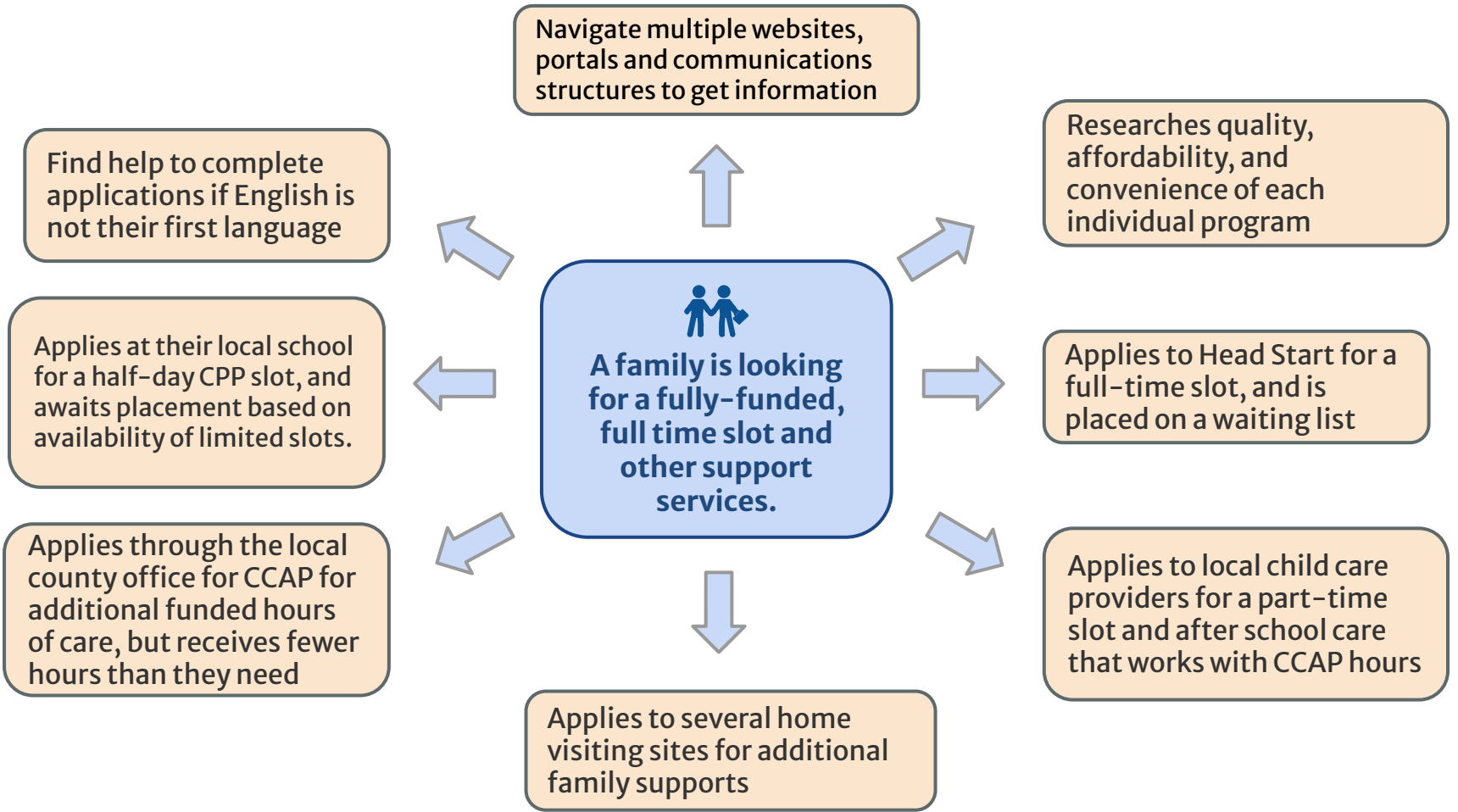
**HB21-1304 requires the transition plan to address:**

- Aligning and combining funding sources for early childhood (taking previous local efforts for streamlining into account)
- Technology required to achieve goals to support parents/caregivers to identify local, appropriate, and available early childhood program and service options and support unification
- Early childhood data systems strategies to inform planning, leverage resource, allocations, maximize children's access to programs, & support data-driven decision-making

**Given Colorado's local control context, recommendations to improve these areas should consider the appropriate roles for state and local governments and their interactions with families.**

# EC system for families

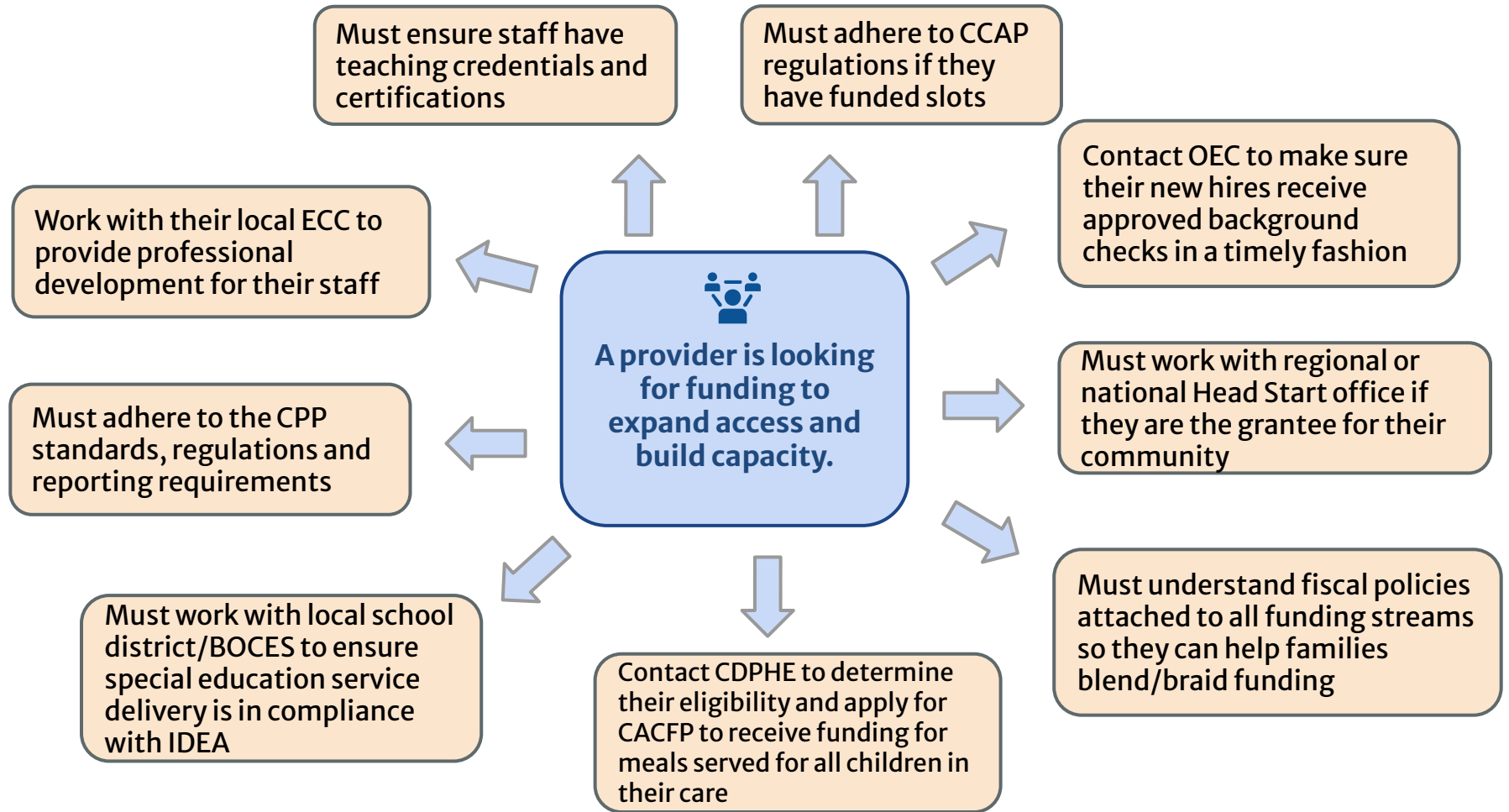
Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, **families** expressed having to navigate the following functions within the early childhood system. An example family may have the below experience:



This graphic is not exhaustive but highlights how the fragmented local governance system can cause challenges for the very people it is supposed to serve.

# EC system for providers

Through the stakeholder engagement process, **providers** expressed having to navigate the following functions within the early childhood system:



This graphic is not exhaustive but highlights how the fragmented local governance system can cause challenges for the very people it is supposed to serve.

# State and Local Relationship

**Stakeholders have expressed that there is a need to strengthen the early childhood experience, not just at the state level but in coordination with their local communities as well.**

In order to implement its mission and vision of creating a unified system, the new department will need deep and effective partnerships with localities to support the unique needs of each community in Colorado.

**The next slide shares challenges that have been raised in subgroups, listening sessions, and previous TAG meetings.**

# Key Challenges

1. Regulations (program quality, monitoring, operations) attached to different funding streams are complex to navigate, not aligned, and burdensome.
2. Separate programs have separate funding and technology structures that makes it complicated for some families/providers and inaccessible to others.
3. Different funding sources flow to different local structures (e.g. counties, providers), with no one ensuring cohesion or efficient maximization of blending and braiding capability.
4. There is a lack of visibility into systems statewide.
  - Clear, real time data on access, need, demand, and capacity by demographics and locality are unavailable to community leaders or state policymakers.

# Current State: Local Governance Structures

Colorado has multiple initiatives to support children, families, and providers. These initiatives are funded and authorized by different state agencies, and are locally led by different agencies and organizations, including:

- **64** County CCAP Administrators
- **34** ECCs: Early Childhood Councils
- **178** DACs: District Advisory Councils
- **35** FRCs: Family Resource Centers
- **1 statewide** CCR&R: Child Care Resource & Referral hotline
- **17** CCR&R: Child Care Resource & Referrals (regionally based)
- **4** Home Visiting State Intermediaries
- **21** BOCEs: Boards of Cooperative Educational Services
- **69** AUs: Administrative Units\*
- **178** School Boards
- **20** CCBs: Community Centered Boards
- **7** CACFP Sponsor Sites
- **110** WIC Clinics
- **2** Tribal Communities: Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- **204** Head Start centers
- **119** Early Head Start centers

A major theme emerging out of ongoing conversations has been the need for a more coherent experience for families, providers, workforce, and children as they navigate these programs and services.



## **Key Challenge #1:**

**Regulations (program quality, monitoring, operations) attached to different funding streams are complex to navigate, not aligned, and burdensome.**

# Prior Conversations

The [ECLC](#) and [PPLC](#) have been engaging with stakeholders in similar statewide conversations where the theme for increased coherence in the system was raised:

*“It does not feel like we have coordinated services. We are reporting the same things to different entities with different standards, different funding (CPP, human services, others). Costly & time consuming”*

*“We need a unified and simplified funding system”*

*“Multiple funding streams, multiple expectations, accountable to multiple entities (multiple school districts, state agencies, national accreditation) -- all exist today.”*

*“could there be one place for all reports to go to and other entities who need the data go to that place and retrieve what they need? We lose a lot of time/money managing paperwork.”*

*“Different standards from licensing, Head Start, state preK, CCCAP, etc. but funding doesn't always cover the misaligned standards or how it flows puts pressure on the provider to blend funding.”*

# Current State: Regulations

Providers and families are required to understand and navigate funding requirements in order to layer funding sources for which children are eligible.

## Strengths:

- Funding requirements are designed to support as many at-risk children as possible have some level of access, without preventing funding combinations
- Funding structures, at points, require local match (e.g., CPP, HS) which supports more resources being allocated to children in need
- Localities are enabled to leverage or raise additional revenue to support children and families in their community

## Challenges:

- Funding amounts, payment practices, and requirements for combining funds vary across each program, making it challenging to partner with programs and funding together.
- Local staff at ECCs/DACs/School districts/Head Start offices spend many hours every year putting together funding to create full day slots for children and families.
- Many resources are needed to help families navigate the complexities of financing their child's needs. An example of a helpful resource is the family guide to coordinated systems of payments for EI services.

## **Key Challenge #2:**

**Separate programs have separate funding and technology structures that make it complicated for some families/providers and inaccessible to others.**

# Current State: Technology Structures

Parents, providers, workforce members, and localities need to have the technology to access multiple websites to provide their children with the services they need, including (but not limited to):

- [Provider Hub](#)
  - QRIS
  - ATS
  - PDIS
  - Licensing
- [CHATS](#) (currently undergoing modernization)
- [CO PEAK](#)
- [Head Start Center Locator](#)
- [CO Shines](#)
  - [Families find a program](#)
- [Early Intervention Services](#)
- [Child Find](#)
- [State Intermediaries](#)
  - [Parent Possible](#)
  - [Invest in Kids](#)
- [CACFP](#)
- [CPP](#)

All of these websites assume that the families and providers being served have the technological resources they need to get online at home or find a resource to help. Families struggle to access services they are eligible for because of technological, language, and time barriers.

## **Key Challenge #3:**

**Different funding sources flow to different local structures (e.g. counties, providers), with no one ensuring cohesion or efficient maximization of blending and braiding capability.**

# Funding Sources for Slots

| State funding   | Local funding  | Mixed governance of funding  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Universal preschool (Prop EE funding)</p> <p>Targeted universal preschool funds</p> <p>Colorado Preschool Program (CPP)</p> <p>Early Childhood At-risk Enhancement (ECARE)</p> | <p>Additional school funds, including Title I, Title V, local funds (e.g., Colorado Preschool Program match funds)</p> <p>Head Start (federal to local grantees)</p> <p>Tax funds, including mill levies</p> <p>Philanthropic funds</p> <p>Tuition</p> | <p>Child Care Development Fund (Child Care Assistance Program)</p> <p>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B</p> <p>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</p> |

\*This list is representative but not exhaustive of the funding universe for slots and services for Colorado’s early childhood system, and generalizes funding governance by program..

## Key Challenge #4:

There is a lack of visibility into systems statewide.

*Clear, real time data on access, need, demand, and capacity by demographics and locality are unavailable to community leaders or state policymakers.*



## As required by the HB21-1304, the public transition plan must:

- Address the extent to which existing early childhood programs & services are available to and utilized by the child and family populations they are designed to serve (e.g. number of slots by program, number of children served by program),
- Identify the groups of children and families (by demographic, geographic and socioeconomic data) who are accessing the existing early childhood programs & services, and
- Provide specific information concerning the groups of children that have historically encountered barriers to school readiness

## After extensive communications with agency staff, here are some key takeaways:

- We can only say with certainty the number of children served for certain programs
- The availability of quality, demographic, and age data varies greatly by program
- Data on capacity and access to care are difficult to aggregate due to the large variances in the systems that collect the data
  - Some systems require data while others allow parents/providers to elect to self report
  - Licensed capacity is available but does not provide utilization rate
- Data on hours of care are largely unavailable
- Data from before OEC unified are largely unavailable
- Comparisons across programs are not available as programs do not have any consistency in type of data collected and data systems are not linked

# Subgroup Potential Solutions

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Regulations are not aligned.  | DEC should revise and streamline existing regulations across funding sources to ensure that families and providers have more flexibility with funds and less administrative burden.   |
| Separate programs have separate funding and technology structures.                          | DEC should utilize one simple application for universal preschool and related slot-based programs that is easy to use for families and providers, and technologically accessible. Over time, additional programs may be added to the unified application as it is beneficial for families and children. |
| Different funding sources flow to different local structures with no one ensuring cohesion. | DEC should itself blend and braid state dollars before allocations are released for state-controlled funds, and it must build local capacity to blend and braid local and federal-to-local funds with state funds across slot-based programs.   |
| There is a lack of visibility into systems statewide.                                       | DEC should prioritize, coordinate, and require the collection of data on access, need, demand, and capacity by demographics and locality in a way that does not burden providers.   |

**Aside from the aforementioned challenges, what other barriers exist for blending and braiding currently?**

**How can we build a system that can accept and effectively use all future investments in early childhood, as we pursue quality and access at scale?**

**How would existing technology need to be modified to achieve these goals? What functions would a new type of technology need to have to achieve these goals?**

**What additional recommendations should be offered to address these challenges?**

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**Closing/Next Steps**

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| <b>September 22</b><br><b>*NEW*</b> | <b>-Revisit discussion on local structures &amp; partnerships<br/>-Revisit discussion of technology and blending/braiding funding</b>  |
| <b>October 20</b>                   | <b>-Review transition plan draft<br/>-Universal, voluntary preschool implementation</b>  |
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**Public Comment**