

We invite you to view the 2020-23 Strategic Plan for Joint Initiatives for Youth & Families' early childhood program, Alliance for Kids (AFK), El Paso County's Early Childhood Council.

Colorado legislation defines “Early Childhood Council” as a council established locally in communities throughout the state . . . that represents public and private stakeholders for the purpose of developing and ultimately implementing a comprehensive system of early childhood services for children in the community to ensure school readiness. “ Early Childhood Council membership” are the members of a voting body of an Early Childhood Council with governing authority over all of the council’s duties enumerated (7.717.1).

The Strategic Plan for 2020-23 was developed by the AFK Council membership.

MISSION, VISION, AND SCOPE OF ALLIANCE FOR KIDS

Bylaws Section 2.1: Vision

The Alliance for Kids is dedicated to making El Paso County the best place to raise a child.

Bylaws Section 2.2: Mission

The Alliance for Kids serves as a vehicle, bringing together agencies and individuals to work collaboratively on a high quality early childhood system for young children and their families in El Paso County.

In partnership with families, this early childhood system encompasses children prenatal to eight years and includes the domains as outlined in the Early Childhood Colorado Framework.

Bylaws Section 2.3: Scope

The scope and role of the Alliance is to serve as the Early Childhood Council in El Paso County and includes, at a minimum community-wide strategic planning and financing of the early childhood system; implementation of new and review of ongoing programs/projects; and soliciting and overseeing funding.

THRIVING FAMILIES

OBJECTIVE 1: El Paso County families experience ease and equity when navigating/accessing resources for their family's health and well-being.

Outcome 1: Increase access to information on family resources, two-generation activities, and projects available, which support the holistic growth of children and families.

Outcome 2: Increase partnerships throughout the community in order for families to have equitable access to information on community-based, two-generation resources.

Outcome 3: Increase families' access to quality licensed early childhood education, with an emphasis on infant/toddler spots and access to Universal Pre-K.

OBJECTIVE 2: Families and parents will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to be their children's first and best teachers and advocate on their behalf.

Outcome 1: Increase knowledge level of families to build skills aligned with promoting and providing positive, holistic development for their children by ensuring access to information about developmental screenings and early intervention, access to home visiting, parenting classes, and resources made available at community outreach events.

Outcome 2: Develop and promote opportunities for families on transitions to schools from both home and early care and education environments, targeting those families whose children are receiving Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC).

GOAL 1

All families and children have access to the resources and supports to thrive.



THRIVING CHILDREN

GOAL 2

All children have the resources, supports, and interactions early in life to thrive in school and life.

OBJECTIVE 1: Children live in safe environments with comprehensive supports embedded and accessible to families in the neighborhoods in which they live.

Outcome 1: AFK will develop a comprehensive system of early childhood mental health services in El Paso County to support the mental health of children and reduce suspension and expulsion practices.

Outcome 2: Families will have increased access to equity-focused resource navigation, allowing increased access to information including, but not limited to, current early childhood education openings, mental health resources, developmental screenings, and early intervention.

OBJECTIVE 2: Children are healthy and have opportunities for positive holistic development, nutrition, and wellness.

Outcome 1: AFK will sustain and increase available activities and projects that support healthy social/emotional development of young children and the inclusion of children with special needs.

Outcome 2: AFK will increase healthy holistic development, nutrition, and wellness resources for areas identified with needs through the work of the Health & Well-Being Committee.

Outcome 3: An increase in both public awareness and “public resolve” regarding the importance of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), the impact of COVID on children and families, resiliency, trauma-informed practices, and community connections.

OBJECTIVE 3: All children are learning and developing and equipped with school readiness skills.

Outcome 1: An increase in the number of high-quality early care and education (ECE) programs in our community, and ensure program readiness to implement Universal Pre-K (UPK), with a special focus on affordability and accessibility of high-quality ECE programs for our youngest at-risk children as defined by children/families utilizing CCCAP supports, infant and toddler programming, or children on behavioral plans or on IFSP/IEP.

Outcome 2: Build a network of Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers and determine the needs of this group of informal caregivers.

Outcome 3: An increased awareness of developmental screening through increased partnerships, as well as normalizing the need for these screenings with early care and education providers and families.

Outcome 4: Partnerships will be developed with school districts to ensure a seamless system of early care and education in the early years and beyond.

OBJECTIVE 4: Children are engaged in quality interactions.

Outcome 1: Increase knowledge and skills of children in early language and literacy through coaching supports, training, and community partnerships at early care and education centers.

Outcome 2: Increase knowledge and skills of children in early language and literacy through coaching supports, training, and community partnerships for Family Child Care Providers (FCCPs).

THRIVING COMMUNITY

GOAL 3

El Paso County is a community where children are valued and supported to thrive.

OBJECTIVE 1: Alliance for Kids builds on current capacity to organize, convene, and facilitate community early childhood services, systems, and organizations for effective and efficient delivery of services and resources to meet the individualized and collective needs of children and families in El Paso County.

Outcome 1: Sustain and build capacity and resources within the AFK team and community partners to meet the goals/objectives/outcomes of AFK Strategic Plan. (ECC Rule) **(Years 2 & 3)**

Outcome 2:

1. Recruit membership from ECE community systems to the newly formed Joint Initiatives (JI) "Community Table." **(Year 1)**
2. Support the development of a collective impact model through the Joint Initiatives "Community Table" as it relates to the ECE community systems and prevention. **(Year 2)**
3. Develop a plan for filling in the gaps within community systems as identified by Joint Initiatives "Community Table," in addition to expanding resources and capacity. **(Year 3)**

Outcome 3: Market and communicate AFK within the JI organization in the community to increase the awareness of JI/AFK, resources of JI/AFK, and Council's ability to serve as the "go-to" for early childhood resources in the community.

OBJECTIVE 2: The Alliance for Kids Council members and its network of community partners build an awareness and understanding of policies and legislation impacting outcomes for families with young children for the purpose of advocacy towards policies and legislative measures impacting young children and families.

Outcome 1: Increase Joint Initiatives and Council and community partner awareness of legislation, public policies as it relates to advocacy at a local and state level.

Outcome 2: Engage in advocacy efforts on behalf of our community as approved by AFK Council members and share, encourage, and engage the entire Joint Initiatives agency in these advocacy efforts.

Outcome 3: JI/AFK will engage the community in a minimum of two legislative events, a minimum of one aligned with the State Legislative session. **(Years 2 & 3)**

Outcome 4: JI/AFK will utilize community and state leaders in policy and advocacy work for information and guidance on legislative items aligned with young children and families, including, but not limited to Colorado Children's Campaign, advocacy "arm" of Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA), and Early Childhood Summit.

OBJECTIVE 3: The community is knowledgeable and well-informed of the importance of the early years, healthy families, and healthy children as it relates to a thriving community and building quality early childhood opportunities in the community.

Outcome 1: Through the AFK and JI website, social media, and community outreach events, AFK will increase awareness and knowledge of the importance of the early years, healthy families, and healthy children as it relates to a thriving community and building quality early childhood services.

Outcome 2: Community partners through the JI agency are able to articulate the importance of the early years, healthy families, and healthy children as it relates to a thriving community and are willing to share the information outward. **(Years 2 & 3)**

THRIVING WORKFORCE

GOAL 4

OBJECTIVE 1: The ECE workforce has access to community programs, services and resources aimed at addressing the health and well-being needs of the ECE workforce, essential to effectively supporting children and families.

Outcome 1: AFK will increase the knowledge of and access to health and well-being resources available for early childhood workforce, including Family, Friend, and Neighbor caregivers in the community.

Outcome 2: Working with community partners, assess the mental health wellness of the ECE workforce and environment (Peaceful Households, Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center (RMPRC) - Colorado School of Public Health). **(Year 1)**

Outcome 3: Utilizing the mental health wellness data of the ECE workforce, develop a plan of action to address the needs in collaboration with community partners. **(Year 2)**

Outcome 4: Implement the mental health wellness plan for the ECE workforce in collaboration with community partners. **(Year 3)**

OBJECTIVE 2: Engage community partners in the El Paso County Early Childhood Workforce Taskforce to develop and implement local solutions to address the early childhood workforce crisis.

Outcome 1: Implement an early childhood marketing and outreach campaign to build a pipeline of new professionals.

Outcome 2: Develop local Earn and Learn pathways to Early Childhood Teacher qualification and secure funding to support new professionals in obtaining their desired pathway to qualification.

Outcome 3: Engage partners in advocacy and policy work necessary to elevate the early childhood education profession and work to remove barriers impacting recruitment, qualification, and retention.

Outcome 4: Support the development of strong leadership and working environments to aid in the retention of the early childhood workforce.

OBJECTIVE 3: The early care and education workforce has the skills, knowledge, and disposition to positively enhance the comprehensive development of children.

Outcome 1: AFK will offer professional development programming to meet the diverse needs of early childhood programs, educators, and administrators (equity).

Outcome 2: AFK will provide access to scholarships, apprenticeship, and coaching opportunities to adequately support the implementation of developmentally appropriate practice and effective early childhood leadership.

Outcome 3: Target professional development to increase skills and knowledge of the ECE workforce to support the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices and effective early childhood leadership.

All members of the El Paso County early care and education workforce have access to the resources and supports needed to enhance their professional knowledge and skills, health, and wellness to thrive.

THRIVING WORKFORCE

OBJECTIVE 4: The ECE workforce will be led by skilled and supported administrators who embody key elements of professionalism and will work in programs that are built upon a positive workplace culture.

Outcome 1: AFK will increase the knowledge and skills of the early care and education workforce and administrators, to embody (or empower) key elements of professionalism, and ECE programs that are built upon a positive workplace culture.

OBJECTIVE 5: The early care and education workforce has the skills, knowledge, and disposition to partner with families to support the comprehensive growth of their children.

Outcome 1: AFK will offer professional development supports specific to effectively partnering with families to ensure school readiness for children.

Outcome 2: AFK will offer coaching supports as it relates to partnering with families per the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS).

GOAL 4

All members of the El Paso County early care and education workforce have access to the resources and supports needed to enhance their professional knowledge and skills, health, and wellness to thrive.

