



ECPAC
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PARTNERSHIP
OF ADAMS COUNTY



Joint Initiatives
FOUNDATIONS

CAREER NAVIGATION TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE

THE PROBLEM TO IMPROVE:

There are not enough qualified professionals in the early care and education field. Compensation is lower than other sectors and the demands of the job can be high. This lack of workforce is causing programs to close classrooms, shift staff between rooms, and placing overall stress on the field. Colorado already faces a dramatic shortage of at least thirty-nine thousand spots for infants and toddlers and will be further challenged by Universal Pre-K available in Fall 2023. Unfortunately, there are complex systems to navigate for professionals who seek to become qualified as an early childhood teacher.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

Qualified professionals are critical for supporting children's overall physical and cognitive growth, as 90% of the brain development happens in the first five years of life. Infants and toddlers rely upon healthy relationships with caregivers. Through the provision of Universal Pre-K, equitable access will support more children to be ready for kindergarten. Furthermore, without early childhood educators, there is a shortage of available child care, which in turn challenges our economy because parents cannot rejoin the workforce. Further undue stress is placed upon working families.

THE STRATEGIES EMPLOYED:

Three Early Childhood Councils (Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County, Denver's Early Childhood Council, and Alliance for Kids, El Paso County's Early Childhood Council housed under the Foundations program of Joint Initiatives) came together to develop a best practices career navigation model to both recruit new professionals to the field and to support those in the field to advance towards a higher level of qualification. **Over a 12-month period, this collaborative:**

- Developed a relationship-based career navigation model in collaboration with community partners, with guiding principles that can be replicated in different communities and respond to cultural differences.
- Provided career navigation support to professionals entering or growing in the field of early childhood education.
- Demonstrated a proof of concept aligned with state priorities with data highlighting community needs, greatest barriers, effective supports, and promising practices.
- Identified and helped to address system complexities and policy barriers.



IMPACT ACROSS THREE COUNTIES

- A best practices model was developed and refined for replication in other communities.
- **237 professionals** supported in meeting career goals
- **93.5 % of professionals** reported greater confidence in achieving career goals
- **89 local and state partners** engaged to support improved systems/policies

**CALL to
ACTION**

- **Support conversations aimed at streamlining complex systems supporting early childhood educators.**
- **Elevate the value of career navigation to attract and retain talent in the early childhood education workforce to decision makers and funders.**
- **Continue investment in career navigation through CIRCLE grant or other opportunities.**

To get involved or learn more , please contact:

ECPAC | DECC | JI/AFK

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CAREER NAVIGATION STORIES OF IMPACT



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I have been so lucky to find Joint Initiatives. I have been looking into going back to school since the birth of my first daughter. It felt like no matter which way I tried, school was just not manageable. Between the cost of a computer, commute, babysitting, and all other costs that come with school, it just overwhelmed me. I also felt like I had no true direction or guidance. When I first called, I was treated with respect and compassion. I was given many different path options and all of the resources they offered were laid out to me. I am extremely thankful to both my Career Navigator, Gwen, and Geanina Brown for all their help and guidance. ~Javon Coleman



My experience with the Early Childhood Career Navigator has been so rewarding by helping me receive accurate information and guidance to jump start my career. Nicole Furlan and Geanina Brown have always been extremely helpful in my return to the education field, and they were always an email or phone call away. Having someone to help guide you through the process and look over your transcripts helped save me time and kept me encouraged. This program has opened so many doors for me by informing me of scholarships, connecting me with program directors, and following up with me to see how things are coming along. They cared about my progress! I can't thank these ladies enough for all the support that helped me push through. ~Latoria Rogers



Valley Christian Academy

The Wages + Stages Workforce Program's purpose is to usher new early childhood professionals into high-quality early childhood programs who are committed to adequately supporting early childhood education professionals in a positive workplace environment.

It gave our staff a fantastic opportunity towards leadership. Traditional leadership does not always work, but this program teaches how to adapt to the new ways of leadership.

Our new professionals at Valley Christian Academy have received career navigation through the Early Childhood Council, Joint Initiatives/Alliance for Kids, and are being supported in obtaining their Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) qualification through various pathways, including Earn + Learn opportunities. Without this Program many of our teachers would not be able to get this opportunity. Valley Christian Academy is incredibly grateful for the Wages + Stages program and how it has benefitted both our staff and our students.



El Paso County Data

- A best practices model was developed and refined for replication in other communities.
- **85 professionals** supported in meeting career goals
- **93.8 % of professionals** reported greater confidence in achieving career goals
- **49 local partners and 9 state/shared** partners engaged to support improved systems/policies