

Foundations is the early childhood program of Joint Initiatives for Youth + Families, which includes Alliance for Kids, El Paso County’s Early Childhood Council.

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

AFK Mission: *The Alliance for Kids will serve as a vehicle that brings together agencies and individuals to work collaboratively on a seamless system of care for young children and their families in El Paso County.*

UPK & AFK Council Meeting MEETING MINUTES

12/19/2023 | 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM | [Google Drive](#)

Attendees: Alma Wiley, Angela McKibben, Chelsy Harris, Deana Hunt, Hannah Levis, Jennifer Mussaw, Josie Watters, Kelly Hurtado, Kristal Boyles, LaQuita Allen, Laurie Noblitt, Liz Denson, Lori Ganz, Lorri Orwig, Noreen Landis-Tyson, Rebecca Pontieri, Ryan Barry, SherryLynn Boyles, Tina McGrath, Willyn Webb, Yesenia Torres

Members Not in Attendance: DeAnn Ryberg, Dwanette Martinez, Eryn Weems, Jeanne Prather, Kathy Dobyns, Linda Meredith, Melissa Gibson-Steiner, Melissa Rogerson, Sandi Kwesell, Sarah Carlson, Shay Almonte, Shelley Ettleman, Melody Alvarez, Michael Gaal, Paulette Olson, Stacey Buzbee, Steven Lewis, Susan Silva, Tiffany Pieper

UPK SUBCOMMITTEE

Welcome

- Yesenia opened the meeting with an ice breaker discussion.

UPK Sub-Committee Agenda Items:

Local UPK Data Review

- Ryan presented current UPK data from November. Current data shows there are 179 early childhood programs that offer UPK in El Paso County. A total of 69 of those programs are school districts; 80 programs are center-based and 28 are Family Child Care Homes. Of those programs, 66 accept CCCAP as a form of payment.
- There are currently 8,320 total UPK applications that have been submitted for El Paso County, around 80% of which were for four-year olds. This is substantially more than the original number of 6,500 anticipated.
- 4,341 four-year olds have been matched before the 2024 school year had begun. There were 5,179 registered UPK seats, many of which are for IEP seats.

- There are currently 812 active four-year old UPK applications, around 16%, that have not been matched.
- JI family navigators are working with families to help match children with UPK programs. There was a total of 827 family UPK support calls for the month of November. A total of 522 calls/emails for providers who needed UPK assistance for the month of November as well.
- During this year, some providers lowered their seat capacity, while some providers raised their seat capacity.
- There are an estimated 8,895 four-year olds in El Paso County. The overall capacity in El Paso County is 5,179. This is enough seats for 58% of the four-year olds in the county.
- D38, D2, and areas near Palmer Lake need more UPK providers and seats.

Year Two UPK Timeline

- Noreen provided an overview for the year two UPK timeline. JI is responding to the state request as they prioritize payments and eligibility.
- The last algorithm ran on November 6th, this means that there are no more matches being made. Noreen downloads new weekly UPK applications and provides manual support between families and providers.
- Waitlists have been sent out to all school districts and providers.
- Noreen is working with new UPK providers and informs them of what is involved with committing to UPK.
- Year two potential timeline: February-March will be open to priority enrollment (families who are currently a UPK provider, have a child enrolled in UPK, or a child of an employee UPK provider); March-April will be open enrollments of those children who do not meet priority.
- There will be dates and deadlines to come regarding future algorithms.
- There will be a 2% increase in rates from this year to next. Three-year-olds will not be a visible part of the UPK system in 2024 as they need to go directly to school districts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers will have more access to the UPK system. <p>UPK Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers would like the option to accept or decline an application. Marketing strategies are needed for parents to tour and educate themselves on a provider prior to applying or accepting a match. It would be helpful to have clear, simple sharable graphics or communications to support families so that JI can share via newsletter or social pages.
Dismissal of Non-Council Members	Dismissal of Non-Council Members and break.
AFK COUNCIL	
October Minutes Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lori and Yesenia motioned to approve October minutes.
REPORTS	
Program Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kelly provided a report overview. El Paso County now has over a third of programs rated high quality and 79% of those offer CCCAP. Currently, state QI funds have been exhausted and applications have been closed. There are two Emerging & Expanding applications in the process that have been approved by CDEC. There are twenty-eight still in process, pending approval.
NEW BUSINESS COMMUNITY UPDATES ACTION ITEMS	
Updates	<p>Council Vacancies and Nominations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AFK Council Open Seats: Military Family/Care Entity <p>EC Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liz provided an update on CHIPS opportunity and reviewed minutes from a previous meeting with Dr. Roy and other stakeholders. SherryLynn provided input on what partnership JI will play in community efforts, being intentional as a council about bringing funding to the community, and what

	<p>companies would be involved in this group effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liz provided an overview of the Early Childhood Business Council for the El Paso County and key membership. The mission is to increase awareness, engagement, and investment in local early childhood within the business community. • JI will need to package and market the support we provide to businesses. • The first project of the business council will be the Early Childhood Solution Summit coming this Spring. The three-day Summit is currently in the planning phase. <p>Legislative Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be an upcoming Legislative Session with the need for a legislative lead from the Council group to be the representation for Council and present information from the legislative sessions to the Council group. <p>JI Branding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angela provided update on JI social pages and that the AFK website is now integrated into the JI webpage.
<p>Action Items</p>	<p>AFK Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send Military Representative and Legislative Lead nominations to Kristal Boyles @ kboyles@jointinitiatives.org
<p style="text-align: center;">NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: January 16th 1:30 – 3:30 pm Location: JI Office – Ponderosa Room</p>	