

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
4/16/2024 | 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM | [Google Drive](#)

Attendees, Deanna Hunt, Kelly Hurtado, Liz Denson, Melissa Gibson-Steiner, Noreen Landis-Tyson, Shay Almonte, Ryan Barry, LaQuita Allen, Shelley Ettleman, SherryLynn Boyles, Kandy McDaniel, Alma Wiley, Lori Ganz, Laurie Noblitt, Hannah Levis

Members Not in Attendance: Chelsy Harris, Eryn Weems, Jeanne Prather, Jennifer Mussaw, Kathy Dobyns, Lorri Orwig, Melody Alvarez, Melissa Rogerson, Michael Gaal, Paulette Olson, Rebecca Pontieri, Sandi Kwesell, Stacey Buzbee, Steven Lewis, Susan Silva, Tiffany Pieper, Tina McGrath, Yesenia Torres, Amber Rotramel

UPK SUBCOMMITTEE

Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shay Almonte opened with an icebreaker
UPK Sub-Committee Agenda Items:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ryan Barry presented the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Report. The number of programs participating in UPK this year is 100 with 7969 of these being school districts, 13 of them are family childcare teachers, 80% are center based and 66 except CCAP enrollment, 44,266 are enrolled and 34 are at accepted status. Three-year old enrollment is 1155 with the total registered seats being unchanged at 5219 with 919 available. The number of family applications is 12,300 of which 1336 have been withdrawn, 3240 of those are in progress. There are 3592 applications in El Paso County submitted, 2875 in progress. The first DAA is going to run on April 22nd. Providers will receive matches on April 23rd. They will have from April 23rd to May 7th to review, and then families will have from May 9th to May 15th to review. The second DAA will run on July 5th.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 846 accepted their matches through the continuity of care and 853 have been enrolled. 1699 seats have been filled thus far. • This information can be found in JI
2024-2025 Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noreen Landis-Tyson provided the additional UPK update. • Noreen provided an overview of the status of their programs, highlighting that 179 school districts and 8 other entities were participating. • The number of enrolled individuals was 4,426, with 810 still unmatched. The total number of registered seats was 5,219, with 919 seats available. Family applications numbered 12,301, with 1,336 withdrawn and 3,240 in progress. Provider applications totaled 392, with 926 family calls and emails and 392 provider calls and emails in March. • The continuity of care review period had ended, and 3,592 applications had been submitted in El Paso County. • No continuity of care would be considered during the algorithm and there is a strict line in students with IEPs.
UPK Funding Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SherryLynn Boyles Updated • SherryLynn Boyles discussed the ongoing funding cuts to the Local Councils of Government (LCOs) across the state, resulting in significant reductions in staffing and programs. • SherryLynn Boyles and a group of 13 LCOs signed a joint letter to the Director and the Governor, expressing their concerns and requesting a meeting to discuss the issue. • An emphasize on the importance of local programming and family support within the early childhood system, as global funding cuts could lead to missing critical needs. • SherryLynn Boyles discussed the importance of advocacy and the potential benefits of connections with the governor.

<p>UPK Information Sharing and Outreach Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noreen Landis-Tyson updated. • Noreen Landis-Tyson discussed the challenges of coordinating in-person meetings with teachers struggling with the UPK program and the need to provide virtual access for those unable to attend. As well as setting up a meeting specifically for new providers to help them understand the processes. • Noreen Landis-Tyson expressed concerns about providers not being aware of the UPK application process, which is causing confusion, and, in some cases, applications being withdrawn. She suggested that providers should be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the application process and emphasized the need for improved communication.
<p>Delta Dental Grant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shay Almonte updated. • Delta Dental grant is a one-year pilot grant. • This grant allows us to work with childcare health consultants to support the development and implementation of the UPK quality standards when it's related to the vision, hearing, dental, health and developmental screenings. • The goal is to hire a health specialist to run the pilot program and build a network of health consultants.
<p>Dismissal of Non-Council Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPK subcommittee dismissed.
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<p>March Minutes Approval</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liz Denson asked for a motion to approve March minutes. Deanna Hunt moved to approve the minutes. Shelly Ettleman seconded. The Council voted unanimously in favor of adopting the March minutes.

<p>Legislative Updates</p>	<p>Legislative Updates SB24-002 – Local Government Property Tax Credit Rebate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan Barry provided updates. • Counties and municipalities in Colorado are currently authorized to issue tax incentives to promote certain uses of real property. • Section 2 of SB24-002 authorizes boards of county commissioners to establish similar incentive programs. • “Area of specific local concern” is defined in Section 3 of SB24-002 as “a use of real property in the county that is determined by the Board of County Commissioners • Sections 4 & 5 authorize municipalities to establish an identical program offering limited municipal property tax credits or rebates to participants. • The opportunity to be a program participant must be equally available to all owners of the same class of real property located in the county whose use of their property is an area of specific local concern.
	<p>HB 24-1223-Improved Access to the Childcare Assistance Program (CCCAP) https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1223</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan Barry provided updates. • The legislation (currently pending House Appropriations review) calls on the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) to provide bilingual instruction and support for childcare providers when meeting licensing compliance requirements. • Costs and benefits will be evaluated by the Department no later than December 2024. • Provider employees with children aged 6-weeks to 13 years can apply for full benefits. • The bill will direct the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACF).
	<p>HB24-1312: Caregiver Tax Credit https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1312</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1500.00 affordable tax credit for those who are dedicated to caring for families and who struggle to meet their basic needs on current wages. • Gross annual Income not to exceed \$75,000 for single Filers/\$150,000 for joint filers. • Requires a minimum service period working in Colorado for at least 6 months within the tax year. • Strengthens communities by allowing access to high quality care.

<p>ECBC Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liz Denson Updated • What are the goals? What do we do? • 3-year Goal, create the opportunity for additional slots, increase the number of business members, develop processes and what supports look like. • 10-year goal, work towards legislation to help fund childcare, developing a momentum within the field, within the business sector to be able to leverage and further build out early childhood systems through relationships and opportunities that people in the business sector have.
<p>Family Friendly Summit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelly Hurtado updated. • Focusing on early childhood solutions for Businesses to include Childcare business owners, directors, early childhood policy leaders, early childhood school district leaders, and early childhood advocates. • Dates include May 9 & May 11, 2024. • Award ceremony on May 11 @ 11:30a.m. Everyone is encouraged to vote. An online form is available. • The Summit will provide an opportunity for early childhood providers to review and discuss ideas, and to explore and prioritize strategies.
<p>Community Updates. Change Maker's Day Roundtable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alma Wiley discussed the annual 'Change Makers' day, May 13, 2024, highlighting the need for increased participation in Colorado to demonstrate support for childcare centers and families and the challenges faced by providers, including lack of personal time off and poor support systems. • Alma Wiley mentioned her involvement in a council meeting for the State, emphasizing the need to advocate for children, providers, and school districts. • The next roundtable event will be held this Thursday, April 18, 2024, at 11: 00a, 1:00p, and 6:00p.

Wrap Up Items Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shay Almonte announced a forthcoming meeting scheduled for May 21st, where a presentation on the results of focus groups on family care challenges would be presented, in lieu of a council meeting. The presentation, which had been analyzed by a subcontractor, Ready Nation, will be discussed at Opus Creative downtown Colorado Springs.• Virtual attendance options may be offered.
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NEXT COUNCIL MEETING:
June 16, 2024 1:30-3:30
Location: JI (Joint Initiatives) Office – Ponderosa Room