



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHILDCARE INITIATIVE LAUNCHED TO TACKLE CHALLENGES
Representatives from almost 100 local organizations join initiative

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO—Today community leaders representing almost 100 local organizations announced a new Family Friendly Initiative to bring the community together to meet the area’s childcare challenges. El Paso County, home to almost 47,000 children five and under, has only 17,500 childcare spots for these children. Another 17,000 spots are necessary to meet the needs of families.

The initiative is engaging leaders from a range of sectors including large employers, small businesses, the healthcare industry, government, the faith community, and education.

“To meet the childcare challenge, it’s going to take all of us working together. Community leaders are needed to champion a full range of sustained, strategic approaches,” said SherryLynn Boyles, CEO of Joint Initiatives.

The underlying problems causing the crisis include a lack of childcare funding, an underpaid early childhood workforce, and the high cost of childcare for parents.

“Parents pay for childcare, which means the quality of education for young children varies based on parents’ income,” said Margaret Sabin, Initiative Co-chair and recently-retired President of Children’s Hospital Colorado. “Let’s think about who parents are of young children—often they are young people who may be just starting careers who haven’t had a chance to build a nest egg.”

“In Colorado, the average cost of childcare per child is \$16,333 per year. That is a major cost for families, often as much as paying a mortgage or putting a child through college,” Sabin continued.

According to Sabin, the broken childcare funding system brings additional challenges. “Early childhood teachers are severely underpaid. The average salary for these teachers is \$14.22/hour, less than \$30,000 per year. Yet these are often certified teachers.”

The shortage of childcare is only half of the story; the other half is that quality childcare can help set the course of a child’s life.

“If we want children to thrive, we have to start with their first five years because this is when 90% of brain development occurs. Communities cannot afford to leave children’s education—who are at this critical age—to chance,” said Dr. Lisa Roy, Executive Director for the Colorado Department of Early Childhood.

“Children’s lives are changed for the better when their childcare is high quality,” said Roy, adding that children are more likely to graduate high school, enroll in college or technical school, earn higher wages over their lifetime, and have better health outcomes.

“Quality childcare is not only an investment in a child, but in a community. When a community’s people do well, the overall economy is affected too,” said Thayer Tutt, Initiative Co-Chair and Board Vice Chair of El Pomar Foundation. “Research shows that investment in early childhood education means higher labor productivity and reduced health care and criminal justice costs.”

The initiative is engaging community partners who will start the process of pursuing solutions. They are joining action teams to focus on:

- funding solutions,
- raising the community’s awareness,
- forging partnerships among businesses and early childcare providers,
- child mental health, and
- addressing the workforce shortage.

“If you care about living in a community in which our children are thriving as a result of access to quality childcare, if you care about the impact that thriving children have on our economy and quality of life, then please join the 100 organizations that are working to address our childcare challenge,” Boyles concluded.

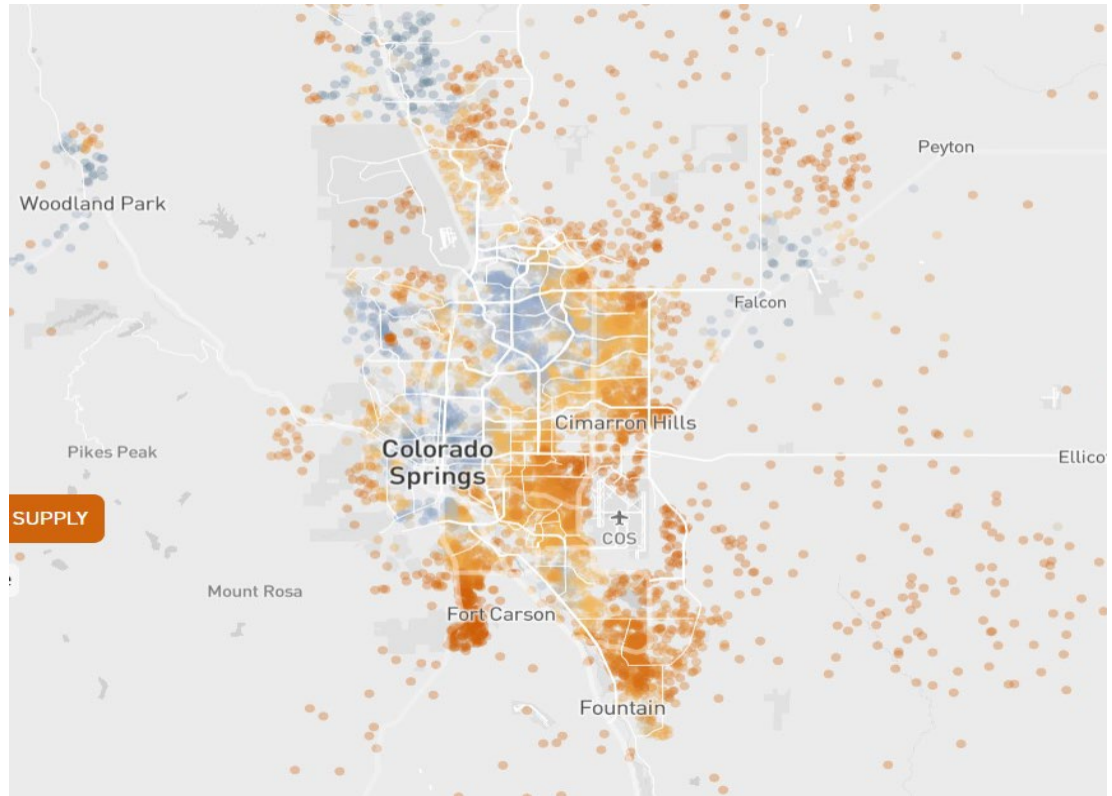
To learn more about the Family Friendly Initiative or to join a team addressing the childcare crisis, visit the Joint Initiatives website at Jointinitiatives.org.

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Joint Initiatives for Youth + Families, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, serves as the foundation and backbone agency for the purpose of bringing together agencies and systems that serve the region’s children, youth, and families. JI catalyzes collaboration for positive, sustainable, and higher-impact services for young people 0-21 and their families. JI focuses its work through two programs. The Foundations program builds the early childhood education (childcare) system, including overseeing the new Universal Preschool Program for El Paso County. The Pathways program provides ongoing multi-agency support to individual youth who are struggling and their families.

EL PASO COUNTY CHILDCARE CHASM

The more orange the area, the bigger the childcare need.



46,863

Children aged 0-5
in El Paso County



17,495

Childcare spots
in El Paso County



16,000+

ADDITIONAL number of
spots El Paso County needs



\$16,333

Cost per year
of childcare
for one child
on average



\$29,570

Average
annual salary
for a childcare
professional

CHILDCARE IS CRITICAL ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- ✓ Generate **\$7.30+** per dollar invested.
- ✓ Improve **labor productivity** by allowing parents to work longer, miss fewer days, and pursue continuing education.
- ✓ Attract homebuyers and increase **property values** by **\$13+** for every dollar invested in local programs.
- ✓ Save **school systems money** for K-12 education.
- ✓ Lower rates of incarceration and violent **crime**.



Source: www.ffyf.org; see page 29

SUMMIT: COMMUNITY LEADERS SET PRIORITIES

Public Awareness

- Connections between economic prosperity and availability of childcare
- Community engagement
- Shift perceptions about the Early Childhood Education field
- Set the stage for significant public investment

Public Financing

Many of the delegates favored establishing a voter-approved children's fund for our community.

Policy Advocacy

- Simplify licensing
- Create state tax incentives
- Childcare teacher pay
- Public education \$\$\$
- Government loans
- Zoning and red tape

Community Collaboration

- Behavioral health
- Businesses partner with early childhood
- Engage retirees
- Apprenticeships
- Family, Friend + Neighbor caregivers
- Navigation

Family Friendly City Summit, Penrose House, May 2024



INITIATIVE TEAMS' PURPOSES

Public Awareness Team

Increase public awareness and generate community conversation relating to the importance quality early childhood education for children's development and economic health and the community's challenges relating to the lack of spots, affordability, and childcare workers.

Public Funding Team

Determine and pursue early childhood education funding that is sufficient to make a real impact on solving the crisis, sustainable for the long term, and viable for families.

Partnerships Team

Increase collaboration and partnership between early childhood providers and the business community to increase the number of overall available spots, identify after-hours childcare approaches, and develop other childcare solutions for businesses and the childcare field.

Policy Advocacy Team

Educate public officials about the importance of early childhood education and the dire needs in our community (availability, affordability, and childcare workforce), and advise them on the efficacy of various policy approaches in meeting these needs.

Workforce Team

Build a cohesive and supportive system for early childhood providers by aligning resources and career pathways and enhancing the profession's value within the community.

Behavioral Health Team

Enhance early childhood mental health support systems by developing networks and initiatives to improve access to behavioral health resources.

SPEAKER BIOS

SherryLynn Boyles, Initiative organizer, President + CEO, Joint Initiatives

SherryLynn, an attorney, moved to Colorado a decade ago to serve as CEO of TESSA, the local domestic violence/sexual assault center, and joined JI as CEO in 2019. Previously, SherryLynn owned a consulting practice during which time she provided hands-on support to political candidates as well as to a variety of nonprofits. She has worked with the National Domestic Violence Hotline, and the National Women's Law Center.

Her experience also includes spearheading a \$54 million capital campaign for a new performing arts center, helping launch a medical devices investment fund, leading the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, and serving as a legislative aide to Texas legislators.

Thayer Tutt, Initiative Co-Chair, Board Vice Chair and Chief Investment Officer, El Pomar Foundation

Thayer is Chair of the Investment Committee for the United States Olympic Endowment, and also serves on the investment committees for Colorado College, Geological Society of America, and Fund for American Studies. Tutt is Treasurer of the National Recreation Foundation Board in Chicago, Illinois. He is on the Board of Directors for Broadmoor World Arena, Pikes Peak or Bust Foundation, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center Foundation, Colorado Springs Philharmonic Foundation, Pikes Peak Community Foundation, and Cheyenne Mountain Zoo Endowment.

Other boards include Garden City Company, UMB Bank of Colorado, Children's Hospital Colorado, Care and Share Foundation and United States Olympic and Paralympic Museum. In 2009, he received the Business Citizen of the Year Award from the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce.

Margaret Sabin, Initiative Co-Chair, retired healthcare executive, consultant

Margaret Sabin is President of Dochas Consulting, an entity she founded six years ago. She focuses on issues impacting children and youth, particularly mental health. The Irish translation of Dochas is "there is hope."

She joined Children's Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs in 2018 and led the opening of its new 111-bed pediatric hospital and affiliated regional programs in May 2019. Prior to being named President of Children's Colorado's Southern Region, Margaret served as president and Chief Executive Officer of Penrose-St Francis Health Services in Colorado Springs. Under her leadership, Penrose-St Francis was named one of Healthgrades America's 50 Best Hospitals for 10 consecutive years. Margaret has also held three other CEO titles in her career.

Dr. Lisa Roy, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Early Childhood

Lisa Roy is the Executive Director for the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. Lisa was the Director of Program Development at the Buffett Institute and also served as executive director of the Early Childhood Department at Denver Public Schools. There, she managed a \$57 million budget that supported more than 5,000 3- and 4-year-olds within the District and 2,500 half-day slots with community providers.

Previously, Roy has done consultant work for Grantmakers for Education as the organization's equity impact group lead and served as the executive director of the Timothy and Bernadette Marquez Foundation. Roy worked in Washington, D.C., for the Center for the Study of Social Policy as a senior associate, supporting the Child Healthy and Prepared to Succeed in School agenda for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. She also served as a grant officer for the Piton Foundation and Daniels Fund, as a Head Start administrator for the City and County of Denver, and as a director of early childhood programs for the Clayton Foundation and Catholic Charities.