

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.*

<p>AFK Council Meeting MEETING MINUTES November 19, 2024 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM Google Drive</p>	
<p>Attendees: Shay Almonte, SherryLynn Boyles, Kandy McDaniel, Angela McKibben, Dwanette Martinez, Alma Wiley, Polly Doering, Sarah Carlson, Althea Jordan, Melissa Gibson-Steiner, Noreen Landis-Tyson, Toya Graham, Kelly Hurtado, Laurie Noblitt, Lori Ganz, Jennifer Mussaw, Sophia Horne</p>	
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants introduced themselves and shared their hypothetical superpowers during a zombie apocalypse.
Approval of October Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All approved
UPK Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are currently 208 childcare providers active for the 2024–2025 school year. Two new providers joined this year, while a few others left due to operational challenges or business closures. Retention strategies are being discussed to keep existing providers and attract new ones. Challenges: Delayed payment processing from the state. Inadequate support and communication lead to frustration. Plans to improve payment systems and communication. Staff changes in the State Department are causing delays and confusion. Providers are preparing for family applications for the 2025-26 school year to open on December 17th.

<p>Governor’s Budget/CCCAP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state is facing a \$900 million deficit. Departments across the state are required to reduce budgets by 5%. Specific implications are still unfolding, with updates expected after meetings in December • Due to budget constraints, new CCAP applications were halted starting November 6th. Exceptions include recipients of TANF, families transitioning off TANF to low-income, and families involved in child welfare cases. • Families already in CCCAP remain eligible, but no new applications are being processed unless families fall into exempt categories • There is no timeline for lifting the freeze, though past freezes have lasted six months or longer. • Providers can still gain fiscal agreements to support families currently using CCCAP.
<p>Strategic Plan Revision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council reviewed and voted to approve updates to the AFK Strategic Plan. Revisions include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Increase public understanding of the need for childcare. ➢ Keep track of new laws and adjust plans to align with them. ➢ Improve how information is shared with families and providers. ➢ Align local committees and efforts with state-level goals for better impact.
<p>Council Committees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Policy and Legislation • Communications + Membership Committee: • Workforce Development • Mental Health and Wellness • Quality Standards Task Force
<p>Action Items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shay will create some goals and objectives to go along with the Council Committees.
<p style="text-align: center;">NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: December 17, 2024, 1:30-3:00 pm Location: 1600 Union BLVD, Colorado Springs, Co</p>	