



**Pueblo Early
Childhood Council**

MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 22, 2021 VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

Mission Statement

Pueblo Early Childhood Council is a diverse, active network that collaborates and advocates to enrich and strengthen the lives of children, families, and the community.

Attendance:

Angie Shehorn-PECC/Children First
Michael Calderon-District 70 Migrant Program
Dayna Berry-Healthy Family Connections
Teresa Mathews-PECC/Children First
Josette Rusk- S.S.Children’s Center
Emilee Alcon-Catholic Charities
Renee Gust-PCC/ECE
Dana Richardson-Life Center Academy
Melissa Longoria-SCCOHS
Maricela Palma-ECMS
Brenda Rodriguez-PECC/Children First
Rhonda Duskey-Kochis-CDI/SCCOHS
Rebecca Bellavia-PDHS
Angie Rogers-Children’s Palace
Victoria Romero-SCCOHS

Paula Arellano- PECC/Children First
Molly Milusnic-PECC/Children First
Justin Gage-PDPHE
Pamela Doyle-Healthy Family Connections
Veronica Ibarra-Early Learning Ventures
Lindsey Dunbar-PDPHE
Gerald Cassanova-Gallegos-Safe Baby Court
Rita Samora-ECMS
Maria Subia-ESCCC
Kirsten Dees-Rawlings Library
Darlene Bermudez-District 60/Child Find
Leanna Montoya-ACPC
Nina Williams-TSHC
Terry Bond-Children’s Palace

- I. Introductions:** Meeting called to order by Renee at 11:11 am.
- II. Additions to the Agenda:** N/A
- III. Approval of Minutes:** Renee called for the approval of the January 2021 minutes as submitted. Hearing no additions or corrections, the January minutes were approved as submitted.
- IV. New Business:**
 - A. Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference**
Angie Shehorn (Children First)
March 25-27 Register [Here](#)
Angie reports the RMECC is March 25, 2021 – March 27, 2021. She stated this year the conference is free and will be in a virtual setting. She has included the link for anyone to register. Angie explained what a great opportunity this is for both entry level employees and seasoned professionals to receive twenty hours of professional development. She encouraged everyone to share this valuable information.
 - B. CDA scholarship Open for February** [Here](#)
Angie Shehorn (Children First)
Angie reported there are scholarships for the Child Development Associate for staff interested in becoming a higher level early childhood teacher. She stated the CDA credential can be cross walked into the teacher role. She reports some scholarships will cover all the costs. Angie stated if anyone has questions they can email her for answers. She has provided the link for registration. Rene mentioned the CDA is equivalent to the ECE 101 class at PCC if a person is working to another degree.

C. Emerging and Expanding Grant [Here](#)

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated this a fabulous opportunity for individuals interested in opening up a licensed facility - pre-school, home based or center based provider. She included the link to the application. Angie pointed out the provider must obtain a license number in order to apply for the grant. She stated it is a seventeen month grant opportunity through June 30, 2022. She encouraged everyone to connect interested parties with Children First or provide them the link. Angie stated the budget is anywhere from \$3,000 to \$50,000. She also reported existing licensed providers wanting to increase their license capacity for infant care and toddler care, birth to five years old, can apply for this grant. Angie stated unfortunately if providers are fully funded, like Head Start or CPP, they are not eligible for the grant. She will available via email or telephone to answer any questions. She was excited to report several applications are in progress in Pueblo.

D. Speak Up for Kids Day [Register](#)

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated Speak Up for Kids Day will be held, March 18, 2021, virtually. She reported registration is open for anyone interested in learning how to speak to their legislators and how to discuss their passions and bills proposed in legislation this year. She informed everyone it is the 10th Annual Speak Up for Kids Day and it would be a great opportunity to get involved. Angie stated she has attended and has enjoyed speaking with legislators as well as visiting the capitol.

E. New Agenda Item: Pueblo Community Perspective

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie reported the council decided to add a new item to the agenda every month starting with Universal Pre-school. She states it is to get the Pueblo perspective about specific topics. Angie asked if anyone has topics they would like to discuss let her know. She tested some polls about a new system for Universal Pre-School. Discussion followed.

1. Universal Preschool (Prop EE)

a. When you think about universal preschool, what are you excited about? What are you fearful about?

- Very important during this COVID times, children are glued to screens and this would be a great kickoff
- Middle class able to access free pre-school
- Important learning time for this age group
- Awesome to see children will be prepared
- Level playing field for families
- Excited about the community involvement in preparation for school
- Fearful of effects on private pre-schools
- Remote learning does not provide active learning
- Climate of struggle to find Early Childhood Professionals
- Institutional systems will rely on those that do not have experience or education
- Address quality of teachers through experience and education

Angie pointed out legislation mandates this be a multi-delivery system for all licensed facilities-homes, centers, pre-schools as well as school district pre-schools, leveling the playing field for families. A question was asked if the Colorado Pre-school program going forward as it is or is the state going to finance through the Finance Act. Angie stated that decision has not been made yet, but there is talk about blending with CPP, others believe CPP needs updating, and other stated money could possibly work in partnership to offer additional hours or full time pre-school. Another question was asked if there would be a prescribed curriculum like that in Kansas City. Angie replied there were two suggestions to offer a menu of acceptable curriculum or meet programs with existing curriculum and assess if effective.

Discussion regarding the start of the Colorado Pre-school pilot took child care provider and private sector involvement regarding opening of this program. Angie polled the age group that Universal Pre-school should serve: results- 3-4 year olds-50%, will be shared with the state.

- b. What are the goals for ECE for (your/your community's) children in their year before kindergarten?
 - Partnerships with receiving schools
 - Children are school ready emotionally as well as educationally

Discussion followed regarding the investment in the pay scale for early childhood teachers. Angie polled what agency should manage the funds. Results: divided fairly equal between the Colorado Department of Human Services-30% and Colorado Department of Education-39%. She also polled local management of funds. Results: 60%-Early Childhood Council.
- c. What does high-quality preschool mean to you?
 - Experienced and educated staff
 - Funding support for existing programs
- d. What would you and your community or the families you serve need to make an expansion of preschool possible (if anything)?
 - Definitely need teachers
 - Local decision making
 - Appreciation of impact on early childhood education and positive experiences on lifelong learning and success
 - Community awareness

Discussion followed regarding addressing an awareness possibly through social media, and community college class sizes. Angie informs everyone, in the emails sent out about the EC community check in with Colorado Children's campaign, there is a link to the Governors proposed legislation and budget item just scratching the surface to address the compensation for increased wages for early childhood teachers and assistants. She encourages everyone to check out the information and speak out so the Pueblo Community voice is heard.

V. Old Business:

A. Children First Child Care Connections: – www.childrenfirstco.org

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie asked for everyone to please share this link with parents. She stated they can search through availability and transportation.

VI. Sub Groups: (subgroups); please read mission statement

- A. **Social Emotional** – Lindsey Dunbar – Lindsey stated conversation around resilience in the child care centers, children and families. She would like to forward an email about teen camps around grief and stress around the pandemic. She mentioned Gerald and she would go over mental health and first aid training with the PECC group around the new curriculum and more to come. Lindsey reported when trainings will be scheduled for adult or youth. Lindsey stated the QPR training will be coming March or April. She stated in the near future Wendy will run the new ASQ trainings. Lindsey informed everyone of Wednesday's meeting, February 23, 2021, after the Early Childhood Meeting, from 1—2 pm via Zoom. She reports in last month's meeting as well as February's meeting they discussed resilience for children, providers, and families. She asked for ideas to promote messaging and create resources for centers and home providers. Discussion ensued around QPR. She stated it is Question, Persuade, Refer training for suicide prevention, about one and a half to two hours of focusing on signs and symptoms of suicide. Lindsey reported it is a quick useful training around statistics and how to approach, refer and provide support.
- B. **Early Care and Learning**- Rita Samora and Mari Palma- Mari reminded everyone March 3, 2021, from 2pm to 3pm, will be their quarterly meeting and will send the link too Teresa to forward. She stated they are discussing Tree of Life and events to be held outside.
- C. **Family Connects** –Emilee Alcon- Emilee reported they met last week. She stated the group approved a flyer for Dads Raising Readers-fun and easy reading tips for children. She reported they are still working on an article on the importance of fatherhood, but should be finished and approved by the March meeting. Emilee stated the next meeting is March 16, 2021 at 2pm, the 3rd Tuesday of the month. She asked if anyone is interested contact her and she will send out the link.

D. Health and Wellness Advisory - Pamela Doyle and Justin Gage – Justin stated he and Pam need help from those interested in joining the Health and Wellness subgroup let him know. He reported their meeting will be every other second Wednesday of the month, beginning in March 10, 2021 at 1pm. Justin stated they want to create a plan of what the subgroup should look like such as well child checks and dental screenings during this COVID era. He stated they would like other input.

VII. Community Reports:

- **PDPHE** – Lindsey reported, in the near future, Angie and she, are working on a survey for child care providers, asking if there is a need for volunteers or substitutes. She stated she is in the process of creating questions and is working with Communities that Care since they will be putting out a survey also. Lindsey stated based on the results, a survey to the community will ask if people would be interested in participating. She stated conversations have come out from the Friends and Family Network interviews, where she spoke with 30 FFN's looking for volunteers in the child care settings. She has been working the COVID hotline and she informed everyone they are not taking appointments for child care providers. She stated the school district vaccines will be done through the school administration and Children First for child care providers. Angie stated if anyone knows of providers needing the vaccine please tell them to Contact Children First and they will provide a link directly to the health department. Lindsey stated now people 65 and older, who would like to get a COVID vaccine, please provide them the email www.pueblohealth.org where they will fill out a form with their information to be added to a list and they will receive a call to get their vaccine. Any other questions call 719-583-4444 or access Facebook. Teresa gave kudos to Lindsey for the process of getting the vaccine administered in a quick and smooth manner.
- **Children First** - Angie informed everyone, the posts Children First puts out weekly on the PCC web site, went out in English and Spanish about early childhood development. She asked that everyone feel free to like and share the information. She also stated the Children First Child Care Connections website can be accessed in English and Spanish. Angie asked if the agenda with the Zoom link works for everyone and all agreed. She asked that new topics be sent to her.

VIII. + and ▲ – (Plus/Delta Evaluation)

Renee and Teresa reported they like the new agenda items. They believe it will provide information for everyone to be aware of.

IX. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:47 pm.

X. Next Meeting: The next meeting is Monday, March 22, 2021 at 11:00 am. Location: Virtually via ZOOM

Respectfully submitted,
Paula Arellano