



**Pueblo Early
Childhood Council**

MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 25, 2021 VIRTUALLY VIA WEBEX

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
Anna Neal-Safe Baby Court
Lindsey Dunbar-PDPHE
JoAnn Collins-Trinity Early Learning
Lisa Armao-Experienced Engaged
Justin Gage-PDPHE
Renee Muniz-
Ashley Lawless-ECE/PCC
Teresa Mathews-PECC/Children First

Emilee Alcon-Catholic Charities
Liz Schroeder-CDE
Rhonda Duskey-Kochis-SCCHS
Darlene Bermudez-D60
Angie Rogers-Bright Beginnings
Terry Bond-Children's Palace
Rebecca Bellavia-PCDHS
Mari Palma-ECEMS
Dwanette Martinez-District 70/MEP

I. Introductions: Meeting called to order by Darlene at 11:08 am.

II. Additions to the Agenda: N/A

III. Approval of Minutes: Darlene called for the approval of September 2021 minutes as submitted. The minutes are approved.

IV. Agency Highlight-Experience Engaged

Lisa Armao-

Lisa explained Experienced Engaged is a non-profit in Denver, and their specialty is working with adults 50 and older wanting a career change or are retired and want a second encore position. She stated they are trained to be successful in their endeavor and work in different aspects of the community (i.e. nonprofits). Lisa stated in 2017 they pivoted to early childhood. She stated these adults will take 52 hours of training starting November 29, 2021 to volunteer in classrooms. She stated some volunteers are interested in early teacher qualifications and will be taking ECE 101 and 103 for free at the University of Colorado, Denver. She stated there are Spanish mentors and ECE mentors to help with the coursework called early childhood service core members. Lisa stated once they have trained adults, home providers and centers will be able to contact her for these individuals to interview for substitute, floater and volunteer positions. She asked that anyone refer older individuals that may be interested in early childhood to her. Angie stated she will hand out Experience Engaged flyers at the PCC Job Fair October 26, 2021. Lisa stated Experience Exchanged will not manage the substitute pool but will train so the adults can be employed by providers. She stated there are also professional volunteers available to help providers write a handbook, help with a budget, or figure out how to use funding in a sustainable way.

V. New Business:

A. Pueblo Community Perspective

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated that with all the money coming from the state earmarked for early childhood the council should discuss how to prioritize spending.

1. Looking ahead with dreams in mind: If we had a large sum of money what would we prioritize?
 - a. Early Childhood Workforce?
 - Definitely more staff is a huge priority
 - b. Quality Child Care?
 - Working on quality child care brings awareness
 - c. Subsidizing child care for families?
 - Help families with the cost
 - d. What are your ideas?
 - Decent wages, subsidized wage programs
 - Competition in job market for child care providers
 - Need trained, involved eligible individuals
 - Need to keep providers in the field
 - Benefit packages
 - Retirement
 - Free 101 and 103 ECE classes to explore early childhood

B. CCCTC/Children First

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated she is excited to announce Children First has been awarded the opportunity to accept donations to Children First. She reported individuals donating will receive a 50% tax credit on their donation up to \$200,000 and that money will be used for 3 different areas. She encouraged council members share the information with those people interested in donating money to benefit the Pueblo community. She stated it was a partnership between Children First and the Health Department to request this tax credit. Angie will send out the infographic after the meeting.

1. Making information around childcare and related resources available to families, looking for and utilizing childcare services.
2. Assisting individuals pursuing early childhood education at the college level.
3. Supporting the childcare workforce through professional development, maintaining licensures, and building their business.

C. Mobile Child Care-Update

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie briefly explained Illuminate Colorado has an initiative called eliminating childcare supporting families who are seeking addiction treatment supports and behavioral supports. She stated Pueblo has been working with Illuminate Colorado for several months to apply for a mobile childcare unit. She was happy to report Children First was awarded the third mobile child care unit that will be a 55 foot retrofitted RV wrapped to resemble our Pueblo community. Children First will be representing Southeast Colorado, Fremont County, east to the Kansas border and south to the New Mexico border. She stated the RV will be parked at the agencies parking lot and offer care for children during a scheduled adult treatment visit. Angie mentioned early childhood professionals will man the RV, be employed through Children First and offer free services to families. She stated because drop in care will be for less than 3 hours at a time, therefore it does not have to be licensed. She reported there are many agencies interested and there will be the first planning meeting October 27 with representation from Fremont County, Pueblo county as well as Las Animas Trinidad and Walsenburg. Angie mentioned a space is needed to store the RV nothing will freeze. She asked if anyone had suggestions for animals that represent our community let her know.

D. Free College Courses

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated there are free college courses, ECE 101 and ECE 103 from this semester forward for the next two years. She stated there are no requirements or strings attached. She stated the classes are available at all higher learning colleges.

E. Hiring New Coaches

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie informed the council there are two coaching positions available at Children First. She stated they application can be found on the PCC website under Community Advisor. She stated coach's assist programs to reach a higher quality as well as best practices. She informed the council the job listing application closes on October 29, 2021.

F. ECE Job Board

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated she is working with the Health Department and Communities That Care to create an early childhood education job board on the early childhood resource page on the Health Department's website. She stated currently job announcements go out through the Children First distribution list and unfortunately if someone is not on that list, they are unaware of jobs available. She stated applicants will be able to fill out a PDF document to add job listings to the website. Angie asked that the information be sent to her directly.

G. Family Friendly Pueblo County Surveys

Lindsey Dunbar (PDPHE)

Lindsey reported she had two surveys to report one. She started with the child care gaps and barriers for parents, guardians and families trying to access childcare and is currently using childcare services in Pueblo County. She mentioned they would like to talk about successes and things they would like to continue. She stated they could set up an interview with her if they would prefer. Angie will send out links after the council meeting. Lindsey mentioned the second survey focuses on implementing family friendly work and policies in the workplace, how to improve recruitment and retention rates. She stated in January there will be a summit event trying to encourage businesses to attend and talk about priorities surrounding family friendly polies pre-COVID and how those priorities shifted. Lindsey stated the survey can go out to anyone from a CEO to an HR person. She stated there is an incentive to set up a time to talk more about personal experiences. Angie stated there will be separate emails going out with the links for those surveys.

H. New Rules and Regulation Town Hall Meeting-November 18 at 5:30

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated the new rules and regulations were approved by the state board and there will be a town hall meeting November 18, at 5:30 pm. She will be happy to send out the new rules. She reported all regulations for childcare programs goes into effect December 1, with a six month consultation period where providers will not be cited for violations. Angie will send out information on how to attend the town hall meetings.

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

A. Social Emotional – Lindsey Dunbar/Wendy Romero

Lindsey mentioned there are no new updates. She stated she just completed a QPR training a couple of weeks ago for the community. She mentioned if providers or anyone else are interested in those trainings they can keep a look out for information. She mentioned the next meeting is Wednesday, October 27th from 1pm to 2pm.

dunbar@pueblocounty.us / gwendolynr@health solutions

B. Early Care and Learning- Rita Samora and Mari Palma

Mari stated they have not set a date for future meetings due to lack of staff.

C. Family Connects –Emilee Alcon

Emile just returned to work and needs to touch base with Maria Contreras. She stated they are planning the November 16th meeting at 2 pm via Zoom.

D. Health and Wellness Advisory - Justin Gage

Justin stated they met last month to highlight immunizations and promote kids to get back to primary care. He stated the Health Department is using their website to get the information out. Justin mentioned supporting Healthy Halloween. He stated they are still looking for members to join the subgroup. He mentioned Paula will be working with PCC at St. Mary Corwin for collaboration with the nursing department. Justin stated they meet every third month on the second Wednesday, next meeting November 10, 2021 at 1pm via Zoom. He asked everyone to email him if they would like to join the subgroup.

VII. Community Reports:

- **Children First-** Angie mentioned Pueblo Community College is having a job fair October 23 from 10am until 4pm. She stated multiple businesses will be there and there will be opportunities to have onsite interviews and fill out job applications electronically. She requested the council to encourage anybody looking for a job to attend the event at the PCC Student Center, on the corner of Orman and Harrison. Ashley stated there will be childcare available to applicants between 10am and 4pm, in the Student Center, Barb Fortino, room 200.
- **PCC-** Angie mentioned Healthy Halloween, October 26. Ashley mentioned trick or treat event sponsored by the student life on campus.

VIII. Evaluation Process

Eileen Dennis

Angie stated Eileen Dennis from Triple Aim will be sending an evaluation (1-5 rating with feedback) email after every council meeting. Angie stated Eileen will compile and share those reports. She stated the information is received in aggregate and any information will help make this a beneficial meeting for all council members.

IX. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

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

Local Resources

Children First Child Care Connections – www.childrenfirstco.org

Early Minds Matter - <https://www.earlymindsmatter.org/>

Pueblo County Childhood Resources <https://county.pueblo.org/public-health/pueblo-county-childhood-resources>

Respectfully submitted,
Paula Arellano