Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission
Kindergarten and School Readiness Work Group Update
September 2, 2014

Co-chairs: Representative Jim Wilson & Ruth Aponte for the Pikes Peak Area School District Alliance
Participants: Bill Jaeger & Dan O'Connell, Colorado Children's Campaign, Evie Hudak Colorado PTA & the Bell Policy Center, Elisabeth Rosen, CASE & the SPED Consortium, Dieter Raemdonk, Douglas County School District, Carolena Steen, Cheyenne Mountain School District, Montina Romero, Fountain Fort Carson School District, Melissa Colsman, CDE, Marie Hueston, Cindy Schulz, Marsico Foundation.

The work group met several times and discussed a broad range of topics related to kindergarten and school readiness. Ultimately, the group decided not to make any recommendations for 2015 legislation to the full Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission. While the issues discussed all merit ongoing conversations, the work group collectively agreed that legislation in the 2015 session was unnecessary.

Specific topics discussed include:

- Alignment of QRIS with CPP Quality Standards: Previous legislation addressed this topic and it is anticipated that an update will be provided as part of the November SMART Act hearings. Additionally, meetings between CDE and a network of critical friends at the district level are continuing throughout the fall, and the work group felt that they needed to continue in earnest prior to legislative change.

- Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN): The work group discussed quality issues related to FFN care, and various options to improve and incent quality. Currently there is work in this arena through the FFN Learning Community, and the Colorado Children's Campaign is undertaking a research project. The work group decided to wait for the results of those two initiatives.

- Use of ECARE Slots: The work group briefly discussed ECARE slots and whether any changes as to how the slots are allocated was warranted. Districts expressed the desire to flexibility with CPP and ECARE funding, and the work group did not pursue further discussion.

- Early Childhood Quality Incentive Program (ECQIP): The work group briefly discussed ECQIP and the legislative history behind the idea. However, the work group felt the ongoing discussions regarding alignment of QRIS and CPP quality standards, as mentioned above, were a priority and did not pursue further discussion.

- Sustainability of funding after Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant: The work group referred the idea to the Collaborative Funding work group.

- Support for High-Needs Students: The work group discussed early childhood high needs students at the first meeting, specifically special ed students, however there was no further discussion at subsequent meetings.

- Full Day Kindergarten: The work group discussed Rep. Wilson's bill concept for full day K funding, and the legislative history. Districts voiced concerns about classroom space, and the overall cost of expanding full day K statewide. One idea suggested to address the space issue is to explore whether community providers are a potential resource for space. Community providers are not available in all areas of the state, but if they are, could be considered part of the solution. Many districts offer full day K through mill levy money or via other funding sources, and additional funding would be duplicative. The work group agreed to continue discussing the idea and try to work through some of the initial concerns. However, there is no formal recommendation to the full Commissions regarding full day K.

In addition to the topics above, the work group received a presentation from Jennifer Landrum with the Denver Preschool Program. She gave an overview of the program, including funding mechanisms, populations served and initial TCAP data gathered from the first cohort of students to complete the program.

Dual-Generation Family Support and Parent Education Proposal

August 29, 2014

This proposal by the Family Resource Center Association (FRCA) to the Early Childhood and School Readiness Legislative Commission (ECSRLC) is to fund Family Support and Parent Education at Family Resource Centers throughout Colorado. The Family Support and Parent Education domain is an important part of the Early Childhood Colorado Framework.

The Family Resource Center Act, C.R.S. 26-18-101, established in 1993 the family resource center (FRC) program as a single point of entry to provide coordinated and integrated community-based family support services for vulnerable families and children. When the state pilot funding was eliminated in 2000, the centers formed FRCA to support the FRCs. FRCA has 24 FRCs that serve families in 45 counties across the state. In July 2013, the state FRC program was moved from the CDPHE to the Office of Early Childhood within the CDHS.

The majority of families accessing services at their local FRC seek assistance with an initial primary need such as food, utility assistance, family support or parent education. The FRC staffs link families to services that meet their immediate needs and also partner with families to provide family support services so they may accomplish goals and overcome barriers to achieve family stability and/or economic or educational success. This Dual-Generation family support case management model was recognized as a Promising Practice for Collaborative Service Delivery in Poverty Reduction by the Colorado Economic Opportunity Poverty Reduction Task Force in 2012.

The Family Resource Center Act requires FRCs to utilize a coordinated case management service delivery approach. The centers have been challenged to meet this requirement since 2000 due to insufficient funding. Despite this lack of funding, FRCs continue to provide effective and coordinated services through a variety of funding sources such as foundation grants, federal funds, pass-through state program funding, and fundraising activities. FRC's annually serve over 56,000 families. About half of the 5,000 families seeking comprehensive services, or 2,500 annually, are able to be served with sufficient intensity to track progress. Longitudinal data for the past six years shows that the coordinated case management services result in statistically significant family progress toward stability in the following family well-being indicators: Adult Education, Childcare, Children's Education, Financial, Employment, Food, Health Coverage, Housing, Parenting Skills, Substance Use, Transportation and Utility Assistance.

This proposal is for an annual general fund appropriation of $2,200,000 to be added to the Colorado Department of Human Service's appropriation. This funding would provide for the following work at FRC's, at the discretion of the OEC:

1. Additional family development staff at FRCA member centers to increase the number of families (from 2,500 to 5,000 annually) that receive coordinated case management services, addressing multiple goal areas for both parents and children to increase family stability (i.e. education, employment, income, early childhood);
2. Support for the statewide infrastructure for family support and parent education through implementation of Quality Standards of Family Strengthening Programs, tracking and reporting standardized family outcome measures (aligned with CDHS's CSTAT System) and training and technical assistance to increase FRC organizational sustainability;
3. Support for an ongoing project fostering statewide cooperation between FRC's, the Early Childhood Councils, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, and other early childhood organizations to efficiently provide family support and parent education and avoid duplication of services.

We believe this proposal would fund programs that are already in statute, with no changes to the program or direction on how to use the funds, and would not require a statutory amendment to the Family Resource Center Act. Family Support and Parent Education are defined in the statute. We believe this proposal may require a new line item in the Long Bill to appropriate the money. As such, it may require a letter from the ECSRLC or another Interim Committee to the JBC requesting the inclusion of a new line item.

EPIC
Executives Partnering to Invest In Children

475 17th Street, Suite 950
Denver, Colorado 80202
office: 303-319-3350
www.ColoradoEpic.org

COLORADO CHILD CARE CONTRIBUTION TAX CREDIT

Early Childhood Collaborative Funding Working Group

Background:

The Child Care Contribution Tax Credit was passed in 1998 and has been amended six times. Currently, taxpayers that make a monetary contribution to promote qualified child care may receive a Colorado Income Tax Credit up to 50% of the total contribution, with limitations. In 2011 and 2012 the credit was deferred as a result of a legislative "trigger". In 2011 this "trigger" was eliminated with the tax credit partially available in 2013 and 2014. The full amount of the credit is restored in 2015.

Financial Impact:

The limitations imposed by the "trigger" legislation created a loss of millions of dollars to the early childhood provider community. With the reinstatement of the tax credit, it is important to re-energize the public/private partnership created through the Child Care Contribution Tax credit.

Early Childhood Data:

- By age 3, a child's brain has reached over 85% of its adult development
- Kids who attend preschool are 20% more likely to graduate from high school
- Kids who attend preschool are 22% less likely to commit a felony

Recommendation:

Develop public support in 2014 and 2015 for contributions to qualified child care providers by:

- Engaging Colorado's business community, community organizations and individuals to develop a marketing program which encourages Colorado taxpayers to contribute to qualifying early child care programs
- Work with the early childhood community to create an outreach program whereby individuals and businesses are encouraged to support the quality care and education of children birth to eight

Commitment:

Executives Partnering to Invest in Children is willing to coordinate the collaborative efforts to bring the utilization of the Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit to its pre-recession levels.

Additional ideas were discussed during the **Collaborative Funding Working Group** meetings that are not ready for bill drafting or do not require legislation, but the group wants to inform the ECSRC about the conversations.

- **Long-term sustainable early childhood funding**, aligned across the various funding streams, is a complex and critical topic that requires on-going and inclusive deliberation. The Collaborative Funding Working Group (CFWG) supports the ECSRLC being part of these current and future discussions with the ECLC, the relevant departments, and community stakeholders. Issues to be considered include: how we restore CCCAP funding on a sustainable basis over time to support working families; how we align and make more efficient the various early childhood funding streams; how we fund current and future initiatives to ensure quality and affordable childcare (QRIS) especially when federal funds expire. The Quality Work Force Working Group discussed this as well in the context of having a long-term strategy for funding professional development (PDIS).

- The proposed **Economic Well-Being Index** (EWBI) was developed by Legislative Council staff in 2012 at the request of Sen. Kefalas (see LC memos dated 5/2/12 and 7/19/12) to research different methodologies for evaluating state programs, services and interventions that address family well-being and poverty. The goal is to create a non-partisan, objective measurement tool within existing resources that would help inform policymakers and the public about the progress of state and county efforts in relation to the selected economic well-being indicators. The EWBI is based on the "capability approach" – the ability to achieve one's basic needs, which is different than the Federal Poverty Levels (FPL) that focus on gross income and family size. The annual federal Official Poverty Measure (OPM) is based on FPL and does not consider other resource inputs or cost of living geographic differences. The Collaborative Funding Working Group (CFWG) respectfully asks the ECSRLC to take on this project that would require a robust stakeholder process to address the various considerations such as which indicators to use that would portray a most meaningful picture of economic well-being through the lens of early childhood development.

- The Collaborative Funding Working Group discussed the important work of the **Family, Friend & Neighbor Learning Community** (FFN) and understands that the FFN community will continue working on a strategic plan with existing organizations that engage with FFN caregivers (e.g. Early Childhood Councils, Family Resource Centers, PASO, and other interested parties) to determine solutions for supporting the FFN community.

COLORADO CENTER
on LAW & POLICY

789 Sherman Street, Suite 300 • Denver, Colorado 80203 | 303-573-5669 • Fax | 303-573-4947

Justice and Economic Security for all Coloradans

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August 30, 2014

Subject: Pass-through and disregard child support payments for TANF recipients

Summary: Colorado law prohibits parents who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) from receiving the child support payments made by non-custodial parents. This proposal would allow TANF recipients to receive child support payments without lowering their TANF benefits.

Goals:

- Increase income for children on TANF
- Reduce depth of poverty for children on TANF
- Improve child support compliance.
- Strengthen families.
- Keep parental income in Colorado.
- Solution needs to be administratively viable.
- Provide sufficient state funding for all necessary administrative upgrades, such as computer changes.
- Provide sufficient state funds to offset all lost revenue to the counties.

Background: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant to states to cover benefits targeted to needy families with children. TANF emphasizes self-sufficiency through work participation requirements, benefit time limits, and initiatives to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Currently, child support payments of non-custodial parents whose children receive TANF benefits go to the government, rather than sent to the other parent. In Colorado, roughly half of that money stays with the state and the counties while the other half goes to the federal government.

The Federal government allows states to let child support payments "pass through" to the families and "disregard" those payments when calculating the TANF benefit. Twenty-four states do this. That extra financial aid could make a difference.

Bill proposal:

- Allow custodial parents of children on TANF to receive the timely child support payments made by the non-custodial parent
- Disregard child support as income for determining qualification for Colorado Works as well as the level of benefit for Colorado Works
- Provide General Fund appropriations:
    - To counties to offset lost revenue

    - For computer systems and other potential administrative changes
    - For enhanced communication or marketing to inform parents of the changes
- Reporting from the state to provide accountability and transparency

Data:

- In FY 2012-13 a total of 7,900 current TANF cases in the year received a payment or payments for one month or multiple months toward their current child support obligation.
- In FY 2012-13, a monthly average of 2,400 current TANF cases received a payment toward current support.
- The total amount of current child support paid in FY 2012-13 on active TANF cases was $3.6 million.
- For those active TANF cases that received a current support payment in a month, the average payment was $121.
- For each month In calendar year 2012, there were approximately 8,200 cases with a current support obligation where the custodial party was current on TANF
- The federal government receives 50 percent, the counties receive 20 percent and the remaining 30 percent is also sent to the counties except for $365,000 each year that the state retains.

Contact:
Terry Scanlon
Public Affairs Manager
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
tscanlon@cclponline.org
303-957-8137

Early Childhood and School Readiness Legislative Commission (ECSRLC)
Mental, Physical, and Behavioral Health Working Group

<u>Topic Area:</u>
Increase resources for the Office of Early Childhood to support increased professional development opportunities for early care and education professionals on evidence-based practices particularly those that promote social competence, prevent challenging behavior and effectively intervene with challenging behavior if it occurs. The Office of Early Childhood offers evidence-based professional development opportunities. The number of children benefiting from these effective practices could be greatly expanded with more resources.

Challenging behavior in young children is a significant national and state problem with long-term consequences for children, families and communities. National and state research indicates:

- Challenging behavior is the number one professional development issue for early childhood educators.
- Preschool children are three times more likely to be "expelled" than children in grades K-12 for challenging behavior.
- Early appearing aggressive behaviors are the best predictor of juvenile gang membership and violence.
- If aggressive behavior is allowed to persist to age 9, it is more difficult to change.
- Faculty in higher education early childhood programs report that their graduates are least likely to be prepared to work with children with persistently challenging behavior.
- Social skills are linked to school readiness as much as or more than cognitive skills.
- **There are evidence-based practices that are effective in changing this developmental trajectory…the problem is not what to do, but rests in ensuring access to them.**

(The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Interventions (TACSEI)
http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/)

In 2006, a Colorado study reported that 10 out of 1000 preschool aged children in child care were expelled. A follow-up study in 2011 found the number had been reduced by more than 50%, to 4 out of 1000. Additionally, in the 2011 study, teachers reported using more evidence-based practices. Between 2005 and 2011, Colorado put into place more programs and services to address the issue, including instituting the position of early childhood mental health specialist in community mental health centers and Pyramid Plus: the Colorado Center on Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion.

In addition to having access to evidence-based models and practices, the delivery of the information must reflect effective professional development strategies such as on-site, job embedded coaching (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Coaching significantly increases the likelihood that new practices will actually be used. Effective models are tiered approaches that <u>promote</u> social skills, <u>prevent</u> challenging behavior when possible, and effectively <u>intervene</u> with challenging behavior. Data show that when a promotion, prevention, intervention model is used coupled with training and coaching, the impact is:

- 83% of children identified as social/behaviorally "at risk" on the ASQ-SE were no longer "at risk"
- Children's rates of social, emotional and behavioral challenges significantly reduced
- Teachers and directors feel competent and confident
- Programs practice full inclusion and no expulsions
- Teachers use the practices with fidelity (http://pyramidplus.org/)

<u>Topic Area:</u>
Immunizations and Physical Health

The work group on Mental, Physical and Behavioral Health discussed childhood immunizations and concluded that while promoting the importance of vaccination among young children and their caregivers is an important public health issue, there are no legislative recommendations for the 2015 session.

Vaccines are safe and effective are considered one of the greatest public health achievements of the 21 century. However, Colorado is facing challenges in ensuring that all children are up-to-date on recommended life-saving immunizations. Last year 414 Colorado children were hospitalized with a vaccine-preventable disease costing Colorado

$26.6 million in hospital charges for treating them. Vaccine preventable disease is particularly concerning for infants and toddlers as they do not receive their full series of recommended vaccines until they are older, leaving their immature immune systems more vulnerable to infectious diseases. Last year 64.4 percent of children hospitalized with vaccine-preventable disease were four years of age or younger and overall 20 percent of Colorado children are under- or unvaccinated against one or more vaccine-preventable diseases. While these statistics are alarming, there is a broad coalition of pro-vaccine advocacy organizations working together to promote vaccines through credible scientific education and ensure access to vaccines across the state.

One topic the work group discussed explicitly was the state's immunization registry. The Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS) is the state's consolidated voluntary immunization tracking system that records and tracks the number of vaccines an individual receives. Current funding for CIIS has remained stagnant since it was created 5 years ago. Stakeholders met in over the course of six months in 2014 to look at long-term opportunities to leverage CIIS and improve its functionality. With regard to children in ECE settings, the vast majority of child care centers in Colorado do not have access or training to use CIIS to verify a child's immunization status. Stakeholders recommended expanding CIIS to child care centers, however additional funding for training and technology deployment is required.

Topic Area:

A robust and comprehensive screening, referral, follow-up, and care coordination system is a necessary step in supporting the healthy development of young children. When we screen children for developmental issues, including social emotional and behavioral well-being, we can intervene much earlier and head off more costly and challenging problems later. When we screen caregivers for signs of depression and gather information about other psychosocial factors that impact family functioning, we can better support both a parent and a child's mental and behavioral health.

And, yet, we face significant challenges in implementing a robust screening, referral, and follow-up care system:

- 16% of Colorado children have a diagnosed disability (including emotional/behavioral problems). Just 30% of these disabilities are detected prior to entering school [See Ready, Set, Go Briefs pages 3-4]
- Less than 30% of behavioral health referrals actually make it from the primary care setting to the behavioral health providers. For children in low-income families estimates suggest it could be as low as 10-20% (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, CDC).

To address these challenges, Colorado must explore financing and policy solutions that promote effective strategies such as public health promotion and prevention, universal access to screening services at the child and family level, the integration of behavioral health supports into primary care settings, implementation of comprehensive and coordinated screening processes that provide family-centered navigation and culturally responsive resources and supports to young children and their families, and reforms to our financing and billing system to support these policy changes. We look forward to continuing to develop policy proposals that can help support a robust screening, referral, and care coordination process that give all children a healthy start.

Tax Credit for Child Care Providers, Submitted to the ECSRLC

Submitted by the Quality Early Childhood Workforce Working Group

Background:

"The most important indicator of a high-quality early care and education (ECE) program is the quality of the teachers and caregivers who interact with children every day. As a result, quite a bit of ECE research has focused on the impact of bachelor's degrees on effective practice. Indeed, several studies found that early childhood educators with a bachelor's degree were more responsive to children and provided more language development and emergent literacy activities than teachers without a bachelor's degree (Ackerman, 2005; Saracho & Spodek, 2007; Whitebook, 2003). However, research has also demonstrated that a bachelor's degree alone is insufficient to ensure teacher quality at the early childhood level. It appears that the presence of a degree in combination with specialized training relating to classroom practice is what results in quantifiable teacher-quality improvements (Pianta & Hamre, 2009). Importantly, some research and evaluation has also found that with targeted training and mentoring less-educated teachers can provide early learning opportunities comparable to those provided by their better-educated counterparts (Layzer, Goodson and Price, 2007).

As debates about the value of a college degree continue, recruiting and retaining qualified teachers remains a significant challenge for most ECE programs. (Cassidy et al, 2011)."
Louise Stoney

The challenge is to balance the need for increased education and training with the cost of care. Wages are 65% - 70% of a center's budget. Parents cannot afford higher tuition and the subsidy program doesn't reimburse providers sufficiently in order to pay higher wages. Therefore, it is difficult to encourage staff to seek higher education and for programs to improve quality.

Louisiana addressed this problem with a package of tax credits, one of which is a refundable tax credit for child care center staff (directors and classroom teachers) to encourage them to obtain higher educational levels. In the first year, $2.2 Million in tax credits were used for 1227 early childhood professionals. Louisiana's tax credits were based on position held, i.e. director or classroom teacher, and the educational/training level achieved by the applicant.

Goals:

- Incentivize staff to increase their education/training
- Improve a program's quality rating with higher levels of education
- Encourage programs or providers to accept CCCAP children

Proposal:

Create a refundable tax credit for child care providers to include teachers, directors, and family child care providers. All programs must serve CCCAP children.

Tracking and Eligibility Levels:

We recommend that the tax credits use the PDIS professional development registry and learning management system. Starting with Credential Level II (which is comparable to the qualifications for an Early Childhood Teacher in licensing) through Credential IV. As the provider moves up the credentialing system, the tax credits would be higher. This is not a reimbursement, but more like a bonus for achieving higher levels of education and training and is ongoing. The proposed levels are:

- Credential II: $1600
- Credential III: $2,000
- Credential IV: $2500

We recommend that the teachers and directors be employed in their program for at least 6 months, and that family child care providers be licensed for at least 6 months.

Providers would be eligible for the tax credit every year as long as they maintain a current credential and meet the other requirements.

In Colorado, the child care industry contributes over $1 Billion to the gross state product, employs more than 12,000 staff with more than $200 million in employment compensation. Increased compensation will have a direct impact on the state economy compared to other goods and services[1]

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[1] *The Economic Impact of Child Care in Colorado,* Miles K. Light.

September 2, 2014

To: Colorado Early Childhood School Readiness Commission

From: Quality Early Childhood Workforce Working Group

Subject: Proposal to increase funding for early childhood scholarships

The Quality Early Childhood Workforce working group recommends the creation of a statewide scholarship fund to improve the education levels of the early childhood workforce.

Summary: Research shows that high quality early childhood experience are critical for the creation of a strong foundation for lifelong learning and development. A highly educated early childhood workforce is critical for the creation of quality early childhood programs. Colorado requires early childhood teachers and directors to have minimal levels of formal education. Providing scholarship funds to encourage and support the early childhood workforce to increase their levels of education is critical to ensuring that Colorado's children are ready for kindergarten.

Background: Colorado's support for teacher education has historically been provided by the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship fund, which is a program of Qualistar Colorado, and scholarship funds provided at the local level by the Buell Foundation. Currently, T.E.A.C.H. serves approximately 200 students each year because of limited funding. T.E.A.C.H. has projected that the program should be serving around 700 students. The State received funding through the Early Learning Challenge Fund to increase scholarships. Thus far those funds have been invested in T.E.A.C.H., the Community College Foundation, and the creation of a scholarship program for Early Intervention professionals.

In 2010 the legislature passed HB 10-1030, which created the Early Childhood Educators Development Scholarships program. This program was created as a mechanism to use federal funds to provide scholarships to individuals who were seeking an associate's degree in early childhood education. This bill was never funded and the program should have been repealed for lack of funding at the end of 2011, but was not. In 2014, SB 14-006 was introduced to broaden the scope of HB 1030 with the hope of increasing funding for T.E.A.C.H., however, the legislation did not meet that intent, so the sponsor asked for the bill to be postponed indefinitely.

Bill idea: "Early Childhood Educator Development Scholarships" – Revise the Early Childhood Educator Development Scholarships (ECEDS) Program in Article 9.7 of Title 22 to be a funding program for scholarships for early childhood educators to get **postsecondary** education in early childhood, without specifying a particular degree, credential, or certificate. Allow the details of the scholarship funding to be designated through rule of the Department of Education, with input from the Department of Human Services. Ensure that the scholarships would be applicable to the T.E.A.C.H. program.

Proposal: Repeal Article 9.7 of Title 22, CRS, which was created through HB10-1030 and replace it with legislation that creates a scholarship fund that can administer funding to scholarship programs.

Contact: Heather Tritten, Interim President & CEO, Qualistar Colorado
htritten@qualistar.org; 303-339-6806