Program Quality, Alignment & Access Subcommittee
March 14, 2025 ~ 9:00-11:00 am
MINUTES

Meeting Objectives:

- Discuss PQAA priorities and action items for 2025
- Determine strategies to promote the finalized Access in Early Childhood Programs resource
- Vote on whether to recommend the IECMH Strategic Plan to the ECLC for endorsement
- Provide input on the ECCS ECCS Prenatal to Three Policy Recommendations
- Advance the goals of the ECLC Strategic Plan

Welcome, Introductions & Approve Minutes

Lisa Schlueter called the meeting to order at 9:04 am and reviewed the meeting objectives. Lisa asked attendees to introduce themselves. Next, she asked for a motion to approve the January 17, 2025 meeting minutes. Gina Robinson moved to approve the minutes as drafted, Angie Shehorn seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Subcommittee Priorities Work Time

Lisa reviewed the PQAA 2025 priorities:

- Promote the use of diverse family and provider voice in decision making by gathering and sharing stories of family and provider experiences and elevating sources of family and provider input
- Develop strategies to support the alignment of statewide early childhood plans and elevate recommendations for increased alignment on a regular basis
- Support the dissemination, implementation, and alignment of new and existing efforts toward the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* and *Elevating Early Childhood: Colorado's Early Childhood System Strategic Plan*

She asked attendees to sign up for a breakout group to discuss next steps to advance the priorities. Each group was provided a note-taking document:

- Priority 1 - Diverse Family and Provider Voice
- Priority 2 - Alignment of Early Childhood Plans
- Priority 3 - Supporting the Framework and Strategic Plan

After the breakout sessions, the full group reconvened to share their notes. Pamela Harris shared that her group discussed current initiatives such as various councils, tax credits, Speak Up for Kids Day, and more, and then focused on how to support families and providers facing immigration challenges. Kacee Miller shared her group's notes regarding alignment of statewide early childhood plans. The group discussed having trusted messengers reach out to the "owners" of the plans to gather their input on how they could align. They also discussed opportunities to continue to add to the list. Lisa reviewed her group's notes on supporting the *Framework* and *Strategic Plan*. She shared that most members of their group are regularly referencing the *Framework* and *Strategic Plan* in their individual organizations and embedding it in their daily work. They discussed whether PQAA should take a more active role and adopt a collective impact approach to determine priorities, measure progress, share action, and communicate updates around the progress of the *Strategic Plan* or a more passive role in building awareness and supporting innovation around work to advance the *Strategic Plan*. Ideas can be discussed further at future meetings this year.

Access in Early Childhood Programs Resource Next Steps

Kacee Miller reminded the group of the Access in Early Childhood Programs Resource which was endorsed by the ECLC at their December meeting. The resource is posted on the ECLC website and is available in both English and Spanish. There are also communication materials in English and Spanish to support distribution. Kacee asked attendees to post in the chat ideas on how to share the resource. Discussion included

translating the resource into additional languages, hosting workshops at conferences to collect input and engage in further discussions around Access, and having organizations who are using this resource make a brief video explaining how they've integrated it into their work.

PQAA Working Group Action Item: Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Advisory Council Strategic Plan

Lisa Schlueter, administrator for the IECMH Council of Colorado, shared an overview of the working group. The Council is a collaborative of partners who leverage their expertise and experience to guide the ongoing development and implementation of a robust, equitable, accessible continuum of mental health services and supports in Colorado and makes recommendations to improve the perinatal, infant, and early childhood system and continuum of care. She shared an infographic depicting the Council's Vision for an Equitable Ecosystem of Care which is focused on investing in the whole continuum of services from promotion to prevention to treatment and ensuring robust infrastructure to support those services. The IECMH Strategic Plan outlines the IECMH vision as well as information on the importance of investing in infant and early childhood mental health and action steps for the Council and partners. Lisa asked for a motion to recommend the IECMH Strategic Plan to the ECLC for endorsement. Pamela Harris moved, Khatira Amn seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.

PQAA Working Group Action Item: ECCS Prenatal to Three Policy Recommendations

Christina Walker, Senior Director of Policy at Healthier Colorado and co-chair of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant Partnership Workgroup, joined to share updates on the CO-ECCS Partnerships Workgroup. She was joined by Erin Curtin, Denver Office of Children's Affairs, Melissa Buchholz, Director of Healthy Steps at ABCD, and Kristin Lang, CDEC State Systems Building Manager.

Christina shared the vision of the CO-ECCS Project which is to advance the infrastructure, capacity, equity, and sustainability of Colorado's maternal and early childhood systems of care with the goal to integrate maternal and child health with early childhood-focused systems so they can work together collaboratively and intentionally to improve outcomes for young children and their families. The federal grant is entering year four of five. The Project is working to address the grounding problem statement,"In Colorado, pregnant people and families with young children face barriers to access support and often struggle to receive the services they want or need, with some families facing even greater challenges than others because of systemic racism, classism, and other inequities."

The ECCS Partnerships Workgroup was charged with the creation of a Prenatal-to-Age-3 Policy Agenda for the CO-ECCS Project through identifying policy and financing recommendations that support an integrated prenatal-to-three system and mobilizing partners to advance those recommendations. They conducted a national scan to crowd-source policy agendas and resources with policy recommendations, created a list of policies, and then analyzed them using the guiding principles of child, family, caregiver and community centered; accountability; equity driven; and innovation as well as a series of questions asking what matters to early childhood and maternal health professionals, is the policy equitable, and is it within the scope of ECCS. The process led to the recommendation of 56 policies which were presented to the CDEC Family Voice Council for feedback and prioritization. They then ranked policies based on impact and readiness to implement. High impact, high readiness policies were ranked as top priorities. Sixteen policies were elevated and assigned to a corresponding *Framework* domain. Christina shared the timeline for the development of the policies.

Erin and Melissa asked the group for input on advocacy for the recommended priorities, thoughts on how to disseminate the report, and what information should be included in the final report to make the policies most actionable. The group noted the importance of including cultural competency/responsiveness throughout the policy recommendations; suggested opportunities to share the report broadly through conferences, presentations, newsletters, and other communication avenues; recommended creating a one or two page summary as well as translation to additional languages; suggested developing toolkits to foster

stakeholder engagement and implementation; and noted the need to monitor impact. The group was asked to provide additional feedback through a Google form.

Member Updates and Public Comment
Shannon Wilson shared an invitation to the ECLC's Annual Report Release and Mid-Session Social being held on Thursday, April 3 at the Governor's Residence Carriage House.

Lisa Schlueter shared that proposals are being accepted for the upcoming 2025 CBHC Annual Conference taking place September 17-20, 2025 in Breckenridge, CO.

Additionally, Lisa asked the group to help share registration information for the Behavioral Health Administration's virtual open forums:

- March 26, 12-1:30
- April 9, 2-3:30

Pamela Harris discussed legislation from last year to address family parental fees and provider pay based on enrollment instead of attendance as well as improved methods for determining provider reimbursement rates. These changes will destabilize the state's early childhood industry and will lead to significant decline in availability of services for children and families. Pamela asked anyone who is interested in speaking out to please contact her.

Dr. Lorraine Kubicek, Developmental Psychologist with JFK Partners at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, shared about the upcoming Project Succeed training session which supports early emotional development in children. The free, virtual sessions will be held on Wednesdays from April 2-May 21, 10:30-12. Please contact Dr. Kubicek with any questions at lorraine.kubicek@cuanschutz.edu.

Next Steps, Final Thoughts and Adjourn
Pamela noted the next PQAA meeting will be held May 9. The meeting adjourned at 10:58 am.

Note: Any presentation requested by the ECLC does not constitute or imply an endorsement of the product, process, service, or organization by the ECLC.

ECLC Program Quality, Alignment & Access Subcommittee Charge:
The Program Quality, Alignment, and Access Subcommittee (PQAA) of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission is charged with identifying opportunities for, and barriers to, the alignment of standards, rules, policies, and procedures across programs and agencies that support young children and to enhance the quality of and access to services and supports for young children.

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