



ECPAC
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PARTNERSHIP
OF ADAMS COUNTY

The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC)



Annual Report

2012 - 2013

ECPAC's **vision** is that all young children are valued, healthy, and thriving.

The **mission** of ECPAC is to build a community where all young children can reach their full potential.

Our Staff

Director

Lisa Jansen Thompson

Coordinators

Rebecca Wilson

~ Early Learning Initiatives

Jane Harris

~ Health Integration

Lilianna Fresquez

~ Family Initiatives



Our Board

** = Executive Committee Member*

Adams County Head Start: Isabel Arellano

Adams County Housing Authority: Chris Shaffner

Adams County Human Services: Darwin Cox

Adams County Youth Initiative: Becky Hoffman

Adams 14 School District: Sue Okerson

Adams 50 School District: Caroline Hughes

Anythink Libraries: Lynda Freas *

Child Care Innovations: Carmen Martinez

Children's Outreach Project: Stephanie Baer

Community Reach Center: Tania Mendoza *

Community Enterprise: Cristie Jophlin-Martin

Growing Home: Teva Sienicki *

North Metro Community Services: Carrie Morris *

Mapleton Public Schools: Jackie Kapushion *

Tri-County Health Department: Jill Bonczynski

New Board Members for 2013-2014

House Representative Dist. 35: Cherylin Peniston

Parent: Gloria Sanchez

Parent: Amy Brunner

Additional Partner Agencies participating in Strategic Action Teams

Adams 12 School District, Adams 27J School District, Boys and Girls Club, Bright Beginnings, Bright Horizons-Horizon High School, City of Thornton, Colorado State University Extension, Community Health Services, Crossroads Church, Franko Group, Front Range Community College, Horizon Pediatrics, Invest in Kids, Kaiser Permanente, Kiddie Academy of Brighton, Little Giants Learning Center, Mountainland Pediatrics, North Suburban Hospital, Rocky Mountain Youth Clinic, Salud, Senior Hub~SWAT, St. Anthony's Hospital~Nurse Family Partnership, Step-by-Step Child Development Center, Sweat Pea Center for Early Learning, Teachers' Treasure Trunk, 17th Judicial District Attorney, Westminster City Council Member: Faith Winter, Community Member: Judy Solano

Why the Early Childhood Years Matter



Decades of research have confirmed that young children's brains are 90 percent developed by the time they are age five and the experiences of young children during these early years set the stage for being prepared to succeed in school and beyond. Unfortunately, not all children get a good start, whether due to economic insecurity, exposure to violence, lack of access to quality care, or other factors. A well-coordinated, comprehensive system to serve and support young children and families can help ensure that children have the best start to life, despite challenges, and are able to reach their full potential.

Studies show that children – especially economically disadvantaged children -- who attend high-quality preschool programs have better school achievement, social skills and behavior than children who do not participate in a preschool experience or who are enrolled in a low quality program ("School Readiness: Helping Communities Get Children Ready for School and Schools Ready for Children," 2002). This positive start to life has shown to have lasting effects as children who attended quality preschools have been shown to: score higher on aptitude measures through 4th grade; be less likely to be placed in special education; had significantly higher grade point averages; were more likely to graduate from high school; had less criminal behavior at age 14, and were 5 times less likely to be incarcerated as an adult; and had higher monthly earnings at age 27. With these results, economists estimate that an investment in quality preschool returns an average public benefit of 7-10% every year thereafter (J. Heckman, et al., J.Pub.Ec., 2010). ECPAC recognizes that quality preschool must be coupled with the availability of quality services and supports for infants and toddlers.

Strong evidence exists for the importance of investing in the early childhood years, especially for children who have risk factors, including poverty. This investment must consider the comprehensive needs of children and families, including early learning, health, mental health, family support and education, and assistance with basic needs.

Adams County's Children

Adams County has the highest percentage of children under age of 5 than any other county in Colorado and has been rated as the second most at-risk Colorado County for children (KidsCount 2013). The poverty rate for Adams County children is 27.7% compared to Colorado's rate of 17.7%, and almost 50% qualify for Free and Reduced Meals with pockets of the county as high as 82-96%. Only one-third of the County's 3-4 year olds are in a school-based, Head Start, or other preschool program. The five major School Districts estimate a county average of 59% of children arrive at kindergarten already behind and often do not catch up, likely contributing to the fact that two out of five 3rd graders are not reading proficiently (10% below Colorado) and the graduation rate (2012) is 66.5% (compared to Colorado at 75.4%). Additionally, there is a high rate of births to teenage mothers (43.5 per 1,000, compared to Colorado - 27.8) and to mothers with less than a high school education – 25.4% compared to Colorado - 16.4%, both which have been linked to negative child outcomes through scientific research. ECPAC works to narrow the achievement gap early in life, helping at-risk children get a healthy start and be on track for successful school experiences. ECPAC uses data-driven decision making, taking into account local, state, and national data, as well as local expertise.

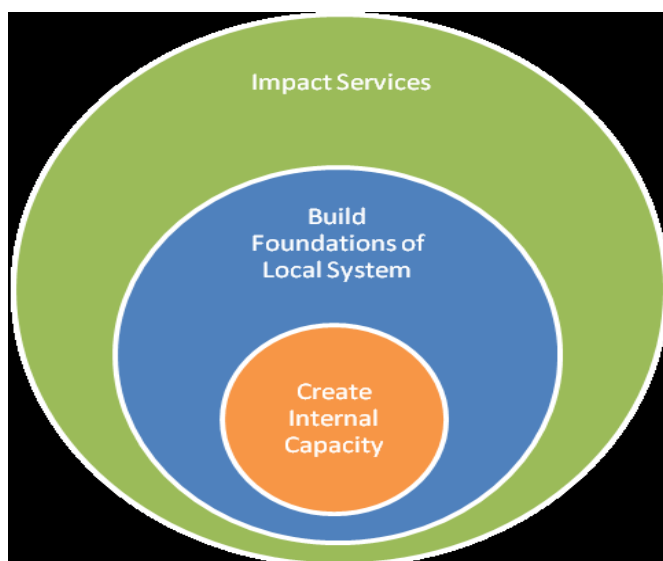
Data-driven decisions



The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County

Adams County leaders formed the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC) in May 2004 and through HB 07-1062, ECPAC became one of 31 local early childhood councils, created to improve and sustain the availability, capacity, accessibility, and quality of early childhood services in the areas of Early Learning, Health, Social-Emotional-Mental Health, and Family Support and Parent Education. In Adams County, ECPAC's task is to convene local decision-makers, stakeholders and citizens to maximize the positive impact of systems that serve young children and families during the critical early childhood years. ECPAC offers the venue for coordinated governance, strategic planning, resource development, leadership, and shared accountability in order to achieve outcomes related to ensuring that young children are well supported and, as a result, enter school ready to learn and later read with proficiency in 3rd grade.

"To ensure a good start in life, all children need access to high-quality and affordable early care and education, physical and mental health, and family support. Programs and services that address these areas are essential, yet they are only as strong as the infrastructure that supports them. To be effective, programs must be organized within cohesive systems that coordinate and align a broad array of services." ~Zero-to-Three: Early Experiences Matter (2009)



FY 2012 – 2013 at a Glance

ECPAC partners spent the last year restructuring to build a stronger infrastructure to support our 2012-2015 Strategic Plan. ECPAC formalized the roles of the Governing Board and Advisory Council and elected new members to the Board and the Executive Committee. Seven Strategic Action Teams were developed, with diverse community representation, to accomplish the strategies outlined in the Plan. Representatives from the Action Teams and anyone with a vested interest in early childhood come together quarterly to ensure all efforts are aligned.

Families and children experience: **Access to Quality, Equitable** services and supports

ECPAC's Core Business: *Support the community to increase capacity, availability, accessibility and quality of services and supports for young children and families:*

- Build & Support Partnerships
- Take Action on Children's Policy
- Promote Shared Accountability
- Strengthen Public Will and Engagement
- Provide Educational & Leadership Opportunities
- Identify Funding/Investment to address gaps

ECPAC's Board Responsibilities:

- Council Governance
- Communications
- Evaluation/Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Resource Development/Sustainability
- Fiscal Management

ECPAC, in partnership with the Adams County Youth Initiative (ACYI), developed a Cradle-to-Career Continuum to collectively guide the community in positively impacting children, youth, and families. Seventeen benchmarks were identified. ECPAC takes responsibility for the first 5 community benchmarks.



Community Benchmarks

- Children are born healthy, into well-prepared families
- Children's health and early learning is supported, at home and in the community
- Children achieve individually appropriate developmental milestones
- Children enter school ready to learn
- Children read with proficiency at the end of 3rd grade

Partners agree that when we work together as a community we can have a more broad-based and deeper impact. As a result, ECPAC serves as the vehicle to promote community action. The belief that young children are best poised to thrive when

their primary caregivers have the knowledge, skills, and support needed to provide them with a strong, early foundation, influenced ECPAC's (2012-2015) Strategic Plan goals:

Goal 1:

Early childhood families have access to available community services and supports that effectively meet their needs

- (a) Increase availability of community-based formal/informal parent education & support opportunities
- (b) Increase families' access to, and knowledge of, supportive community resources
- (c) Increase access to comprehensive - medical, oral, developmental, and mental - health screenings, referrals, and indicated services/supports.

Goal 2:

ECPAC facilitates the Adams County early childhood system to be efficient, effective and elegant so that service providers are connected to one another and families' needs are met

- (a) Increase ECPAC's foundational capacity to expand and enhance systems building within the community
- (b) Ensure consistent messaging and increase family and community leaders' awareness of healthy child development, and need for comprehensive, high quality, early childhood services and supports
- (c) Increase the ability of stakeholder agencies to help families make key decisions about, and access resources for, their child(ren).

Goal 3:

Expand and enhance Adams County's ability to provide high-quality education and care to at-risk children ages birth to eight

- (a) Increase quality of the early care and education system, with focus on affordability and accessibility of high quality ECE for at-risk children
- (b) Promote the full continuum of early learning, (0-8), and strengthen connections between educational systems during transitions
- (c) Provide information and supportive resources for Family, Friend, and Neighbor (informal) caregivers of young children.

As part of the ECPAC restructure, seven Strategic Action Teams, consisting of diverse representation of community partner organizations and families, were developed to work to accomplish ECPAC's goals and help Adams County to be a community where children and families have the support they need to meet the community benchmarks.

ECPAC's Strategic Action Teams

Pregnancy Related Depression Action Team

Increase the number of women, identified with pregnancy related depression symptoms, who follow through with an evaluation and engage in identified services

Home Visitation Action Team

Increase the availability of and access to parent education and support by integrating home-based services into the larger early childhood system

Health Integration Action Team

Expand implementation of a comprehensive health/developmental screening and coordinated referral system with health clinics and community programs in Adams County, including best practices in care coordination and culturally competent support for families

Preschool Matters

Change Policy & Seek Funding/Investing to increase availability of quality preschool for young children in Adams County

Kindergarten Readiness Action Team

Develop and implement culturally relevant activities to help parents and other informal caregivers understand developmental milestones/School Readiness and feel supported during times of transition

Director's Roundtable

Continue and expand efforts to link ECE providers to one another, promote best practices, and better connect to available community resources, leading to children being ready for Kindergarten

3rd Grade Reading Action Team

Increase the use of best practices in supporting literacy skills in at-risk children, through awareness of the importance of early literacy, and through community investment

Advisory Council

Quarterly meetings of Action Team representatives connect the work between the Teams to ensure alignment, reduce duplication of efforts, and recognize the work of the Action Teams within the "big picture" systems work to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated system. Makes and receives recommendations from the Board.

2012 – 2013 Accomplishments and Successes

Partnerships

ECPAC's restructuring process created both new partnerships and strengthened existing ones. The ECPAC Board has welcomed new members including the Adams County Housing Authority and Community Enterprise. Recruiting efforts this year have resulted in new members for next year, including an Elected Official and two Parents. Development of seven Strategic Action Teams engaged a variety of new partners including seven health clinics, a hospital, parents, the current and former district attorneys, a mayor and mayor pro tem of two cities, present and former state legislators, the CEO of a local business, an after school program, and local programs supporting literacy efforts. ECPAC work was further advanced through existing partnerships that were strengthened by new efforts to collaborate. These efforts include the co-location of the Family Initiatives Coordinator at Community Enterprise and the Health Integration Coordinator at North Metro Community Services. ECPAC continues to partner with Community Reach Center and Child Care Innovations to co-locate Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants and Quality Improvement Coaches. Finally, ECPAC Partners participated in two evaluation efforts this year, the PARTNER Tool (Program to Analyze, Record and Track Networks to Enhance Relationships) and the completion of an Organizational Capacity tool. The results will guide strategies over the upcoming year.

The ECPAC Partnership follows these values when making decisions:

Accountable for access and quality: Agencies will hold each other accountable for the accessibility, quality of services and use of funding;

Adaptable and flexible: The system has an ongoing and dynamic process of adapting to changing community needs and continuous quality improvement;

Assessment of practice and outcomes: There is a continuous assessment of practice, organizational, and financial outcomes to determine effectiveness;

Comprehensive and collaborative services: The system has a comprehensive service array that is delivered in a collaborative manner;

Culturally competent services: Services and Supports are delivered in a manner that fits with the family's culture, values, and beliefs and considers the whole child in a strength-based approach;

Family involvement: Authentic family involvement exists both at the service and systems levels;

Funding: Agencies share certain funding streams and resources, and find creative ways to use resources and promote efficiency.

~ adopted in 2009

Communications

This year ECPAC revised the Communications Plan to align with the needs of the Action Teams, which all have a focus on the creation of common messaging to **Inform, Engage, and Empower** the community around early childhood well-being. As part of this plan, ECPAC redeveloped the website from one-page to twenty-eight pages with added resources for a variety of audiences (www.ecpac.org). A Facebook presence was also established and weekly E-Newsletters are provided to Early Care and Education providers. ECPAC has begun to build relationships with several media organizations and became an "It's About Kids Community" through the Colorado Children's Campaign, which will provide Adams County the opportunity to increase advocacy about children's issues at a local and state level.

Pregnancy Related Depression

Research shows 80% of women have “baby blues” and 10-20% (dependent upon Social Economic Status) have Pregnancy Related Depression, which can occur from time of conception up to 12 months post-partum. Pregnancy and the early years of parenting can be stressful times for parents, and research has shown that in some cases, high levels of stress may lead to premature births, low-birth weight infants, infant mortality, and health, development, and learning challenges in infancy and early childhood (Maternal & Child Health Library at Georgetown University).

UP TO
20%
Of Women
Experience Pregnancy
Related Depression



There are close to 7,000 live births in Adams County per year and therefore about 1,000 -1,750 women should be identified and referred for treatment each year. The local mental health center, who provides treatment for women with Medicaid or other insurances, and the self-pay population, received only 11 referrals from July 2012-February 2013 and of these referrals, 2 women engaged in services and 2 additional were scheduled.

ECPAC Partners are working to reduce the stigma of Pregnancy Related Depression through a messaging campaign targeted at pregnant and post-partum women and their support network, including both professionals and family and friends.

Health Integration

The Health Integration Project, funded by The CO Trust, is focused on building a comprehensive Coordinated Identification and Referral process aimed to increase the percentage of families who complete indicated health and developmental evaluations, through increased care coordination and family support. This work has engaged the largest number of partners this year. The first half of the year was focused on identifying gaps and needed strategies. The second half of the year has resulted in a draft “Coordinated Referral Roadmap” for providers, which is being piloted in the next few months with plans to finalize by the end of December 2013. Plans to create Supplemental Resources to accompany the Provider Roadmap, as well as development of a Family Roadmap, are underway.

Additionally, ECPAC supported outreach to interested clinics to plan for implementation of the “Healthy Steps” program over the next year. Healthy Steps will enhance developmental information provided to families during well-child checks and home visits.



Data analysis for 2012 showed that only 52% of Adams County families, with children birth – 3, followed through with a referral for a developmental evaluation compared to the Colorado average of 69%.



Healthy kids in Adams County have access to available medical, oral, developmental, and mental health services and referrals for services are made through a coordinated approach that best supports families.

Family Education, Support, and Engagement

ECPAC partners value that a young child's earliest experiences happen at home and recognize that parenting isn't always easy. Knowing that supportive relationships and positive learning experiences at home can be strengthened through a wide range of informal and formal services and supports, ECPAC is dedicated to increasing opportunities for family education, support and engagement. To this end, ECPAC secured funding for a Family Initiatives Coordinator (FIC) this year. This role helps to ensure community strategies are focused on supporting families of young children and to engage families in ECPAC work.

This year, ECPAC surveyed community partners to identify available services for families and barriers to participation. The primary barriers identified for families were the lack of time due to life/family demands and basic needs not being met. Providers noted challenges with being aware of what is available and lack of coordination between services. These results will guide future plans to increase access to formal and informal supports and services.

ECPAC has worked over the past year to share the Strengthening Families model with partner organizations, with the intention that services and supports are delivered in a manner that promotes the 5 Protective Factors. Future Plans include supporting organizational changes to align programs with this model.

Strengthening Families ~ 5 Protective Factors

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Concrete Supports in Times of Need
- Children's Social-Emotional Competence



Adams County is fortunate to have three evidence-based home visitation programs: Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), Parents-as-Teachers (PAT), and Home Instruction for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI). Through ECPAC, these programs come together to integrate home visitation into the larger comprehensive early childhood system, through shared communication, referrals, and data/evaluation.

Healthy Beginnings ➡ School Readiness ➡ 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency ➡ School and Life Success

ECPAC uses a holistic view to determine what it takes for a child to be "ready for school" and to support community wide efforts that lead to a Ready Child, Ready Family, and Ready Community. A county-wide definition to guide strategies was adopted this year:

"School readiness" describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences, and the ability of schools, the community, and families to meet the needs of all children. School readiness includes the domains of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language, literacy, and comprehension development, and cognition and general knowledge. School readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning. ~ adapted from CDE

The ECPAC/Adams County Youth Initiative~3rd Grade Reading Action Team focused on identifying community-based best practices that promote literacy, birth - 3rd grade, with plans to increase community investment to support these practices in the up-coming year. Over 1,500 books were collected through two book drives to support literacy in our County.

Quality Early Care and Education



ECPAC is committed to ensuring that all primary caregivers of young children are well prepared to support children to be ready for school. The Early Care and Education (ECE) field plays a fundamental role in the early childhood landscape. Therefore it is crucial that the ECE programs (Child Care Centers, Family Child Care Homes, and Preschools) in Adams County have the capacity to serve children with high quality programs that are accessible, available, and affordable to families. To support this effort, ECPAC works with local ECE programs to provide support for professional development for staff as well as the opportunity to participate in the Quality Improvement Project.

<p><u>Quality Improvement Project:</u> Comprehensive Support includes a quality rating (0-4 Stars), improvement plan, coaching, mental health consultation, training and funding for materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2006, 42 ECE programs have received quality improvement support; • 19 programs were involved this year (101 "classrooms") 	<p><u>Professional Development:</u> Opportunities are available for any ECE provider in the County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2007, 539 scholarships were provided for college level ECE coursework at local Community Colleges for 349 individuals. • This year ECPAC provided training promoting quality ECE to 44 providers and training/support to 36 Directors at the Director's Roundtable 	<p><u>Expanding Quality in Infant and Toddler Care:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2008, 267 ECE teachers completed 48 hours of training and coaching in quality infant / toddler practices • Two series of classes were offered this year
ECPAC sponsored the 2nd Annual Teacher Recognition Event , honoring 87 ECE Providers		

Of the programs involved in the Quality Improvement Project (who have been rated): **2** have a 4 star rating, **6** have a 3 star rating, **5** have a 2 star rating, and **1** has a 1 star rating.



3 and 4 stars = high quality



ECPAC worked closely with local Directors, the Adams County Human Services Department, and Aspen Family Services to identify solutions for a more efficient Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) for families and providers. This will be a continued focus in the new year.

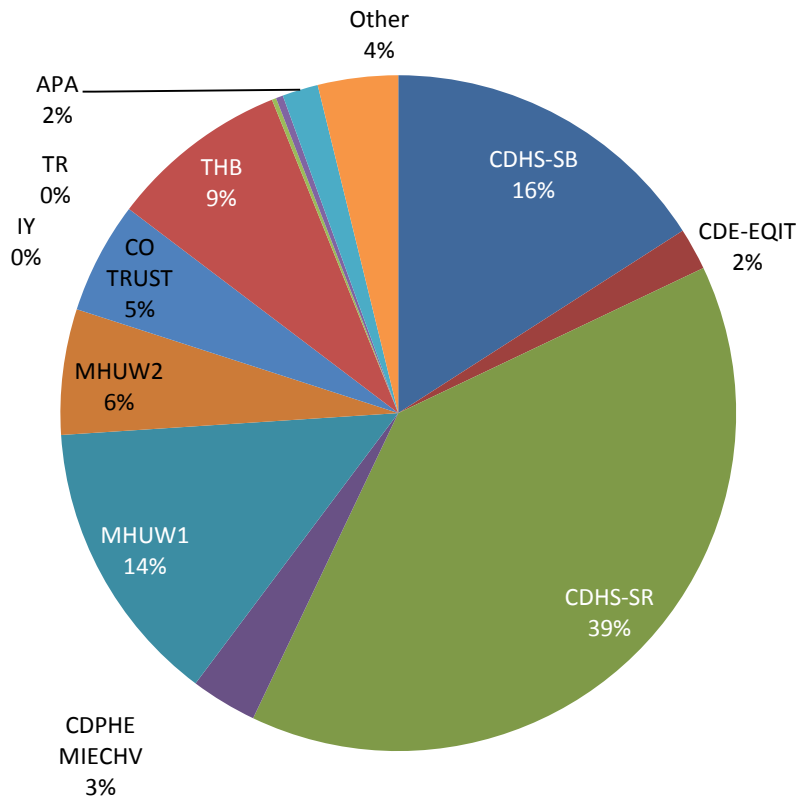


Preschool Matters

ECPAC Partners have put efforts towards this new initiative to increase public awareness of and community investment in Adams County's capacity to provide affordable quality preschool

2012-2013 Financial Report

Funding Source Percentage of Overall Budget



APA: America's Promise Alliance

- Early Literacy

CDHS-SB: CO Dept. Human Services

- Systems Building

CDHS-SR: CO Dept. Human Services

- School Readiness Project

CDE: CO Dept. Education – EQIT

- Professional Development

CDPHE – MIECHV: CO Dept. of Public Health/Environment

- Home Visitation Systems

MHUW 1 & 2: Mile High United Way

- Quality Improvement Project

CO Trust:

- Health Integration

THB: Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation

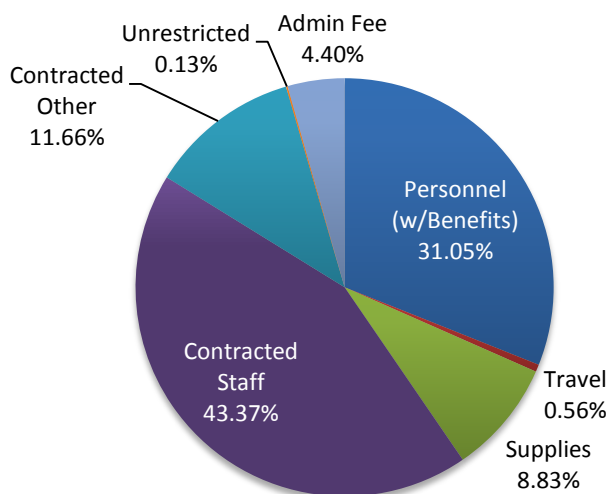
- Family Initiatives Coordinator
- College ECE Scholarships

IY: Incredible Years – Materials

TR: Teacher Recognition Event (Donations)

Other: Donations, Class Registration Fees

Percent Spent per Funding Category



Personnel:

Director

Early Learning Initiatives Coordinator

Contracted Staff:

Health Integration Coordinator

Family Initiatives Coordinator

ECE Quality Improvement Coaches

ECE Mental Health Consultants

We would like to thank those who financially support the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County



Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation

Supporting the positive development of young children in Colorado.

Thank you to local businesses for your generous donations of resources or time

Walmart
Joseph Davis – Sherman Howard Law Firm
Kaplan Early Learning
John R. Green Company

Laura Hazen-Attorney/Presenter
Mernie Rosenberg – Presenter
Lakeshore Learning
Constructive Playthings

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Duane Jansen -- Martin/Martin Inc.

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