



**ECPAC**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP  
OF ADAMS COUNTY

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **2020-2024**

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## Acknowledgements

ECPAC extends its deepest gratitude and appreciation for its partners, families and staff who helped support the development of this strategic plan. It is through this partnership, in the truest sense of the word, that we are able to make a positive difference for our community’s young children and families. *Thank you.*



## Introduction and Background

Reaching the end of its ambitious 2015–2020 strategic plan, the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC) contracted with Joining Vision and Action (JVA) to facilitate a new strategic planning process that built upon past successes, stayed true to its origins and core purpose, and incorporated diverse stakeholder voices.

Beginning in fall 2019, ECPAC and JVA facilitated multiple engagements with stakeholders, including:

- One meeting with board members to develop the “big picture” direction, overarching framework, and goals
- One meeting with community partners to provide collaborative perspectives on crafting goals and strategies
- Two meetings with families who have worked with ECPAC, one facilitated in English and one in Spanish, to inform participant experience and needs moving forward
- Two meetings with staff members, one to focus on defining core values and one to gather insights into strategies

Information gathered from these meetings, in partnership with ECPAC leadership, was analyzed and synthesized into five primary areas of work that complement core focus areas established for Early Childhood Councils (ECCs), including quality, accessibility (as well as affordability), capacity, availability, and systems. Demographics and trends within the early childhood sector, both locally and statewide, were also reviewed and cross-referenced with organizational strengths to identify opportunities for ultimate impact.

This document shares the “big picture” guiding framework, goals, objectives, and strategies for a **three-year period beginning on July 1, 2020 and ending on June 30, 2023**. While this plan is considered the roadmap, ECPAC is committed to being responsive and providing the most relevant services for its community. As such and given unexpected events like the COVID-19 pandemic occurring during the development of this plan, ECPAC acknowledges the possibility of pivoting as appropriate to best meet the needs of Adams County. **The ECPAC Governing Board made the determination to extend this plan one more year through June 2024 due to the quickly changing early childhood landscape due to the COVID funded programming and Universal Pre-K rolling out in Fall 2023.** With this extension, minor revisions were made to reflect the evolution of ECPAC’s work from 2020-2023. The Board additionally updated ECPAC’s vision and mission to be inclusive of “early childhood professionals” as of July 2023.

## Strategic Foundation: Identity and Purpose

ECPAC is a partnership of community service organizations, families, and other key stakeholders such as elected officials and businesses, working together to increase equitable access to affordable, high-quality early childhood and family services and supports in the areas of early learning, health/mental health, and family support/education toward the ultimate goal that: **all Adams County children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn and succeed.**



**Vision:** All children, their families, and early childhood professionals are valued, healthy, and thriving.

**Mission:** Building a community where every young child, their family, and early childhood professionals can reach their full potential.

### Core Business

The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC) is the official Early Childhood Council serving Adams County. Through legislation, ECPAC is charged to improve the system serving young children by improving equitable access to affordable, high-quality services in early learning, health/mental health, and family support and education, towards the ultimate goal that all children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn and succeed.

ECPAC's role to facilitate communitywide efforts to address complex social issues related to kindergarten readiness include strategies to prevent and mitigate against the impacts of high poverty, high child abuse and neglect rates, low academic performance, and lack of a valued early childhood workforce. It is recognized that children grow and thrive in the context of relationships with adults (families, communities, and early childhood professionals) and therefore necessary to address the full early childhood ecosystem.

ECPAC accomplished this through its core business to equitably improve systems through:

- Ensure a strong governance system that supports its core business.
- Build and maintain a strong partnership that promotes shared accountability for improved child and family outcomes and is fully engaged in the agreed upon community strategic plan.
- Fostering leadership of community/family members and service providers.
- Ensuring sufficient investments are available through sharing resources, improved use of existing resources and obtaining new resources.
- Strengthening the public will to best support young children and their families.
- Working together to address system and policy barriers to improved outcomes.
- Providing professional development opportunities to improve the quality of cross-domain early childhood services towards maximum benefit.

ECPAC provides direct services to early care and education programs and to families of young children in collaboration with other community partners to fill gaps and reduce barriers as identified through assessments with partners and the community. On-going evaluation of services inform systems change.

## Partnership Guiding Principles

ECPAC is a governing and collaborative body with multiple perspectives and sets of values from each of its community organization and family partners. However, its partners have identified shared points of emphasis and focus for their work together. These “guiding principles” are as follows:

- **To be accountable for access and quality.** Agencies will hold each other accountable for the accessibility, quality of services, and use of funding.
- **To be adaptable and flexible.** The system has an ongoing and dynamic process of adapting to changing community needs and continuous quality improvement.
- **To incorporate assessment of practices and outcomes.** There is a continuous assessment of programmatic, organizational, and financial outcomes to determine effectiveness.
- **To provide comprehensive and collaborative services.** The system has a comprehensive service array that is delivered in a collaborative manner.
- **To provide culturally responsive 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.
- **To support family involvement and leadership.** Authentic family involvement exists both at the service level and the systems level and families are supported to become leaders in their community.
- **To be sustainable and efficient.** Agencies share certain funding streams and resources and find creative ways to use resources and promote efficiency.

## Organizational Core Values

Underpinning ECPAC's ultimate goal, vision, and mission are its core values—the key tenets of operations that are to be upheld no matter what. To that end, ECPAC staff identified the following core values to guide short-term and long-term decision making:

### EQUITY

ECPAC creates an environment of trust, promotes honest conversations, and strives to make decisions that help reduce system inequities and biases.

### PROFESSIONALISM

ECPAC is an organization that provides dependable leaders to work in the community who strive for excellence and offer expertise in a respectful and collaborative manner.

### EXCELLENCE

ECPAC is an organization that is accountable, innovative, adaptable and bold; promotes the delivery of high-quality service to our partners and community; and supports leadership.

### TEAMWORK

ECPAC is an organization that values everyone for their unique role and strengths and creates a welcoming, compassionate, collaborative, and supportive team-based work environment.

### INTEGRITY

ECPAC is dependable, reliable, and trustworthy; ensures good follow through; and maintains confidentiality, honesty, and openness whether information is favorable or unfavorable.

### DEDICATION

ECPAC staff are dedicated and loyal to our organizational mission of helping children and families thrive.

## Strategic Vision and Goals

Looking ahead to the “big picture” vision of what having capacity for a more equitable, high-quality, accessible (including affordable), available, system will look like, the following goals were identified. *ECPAC imagines a 2024 where ...*



***Community members, partners, and service providers are better positioned to understand and act upon matters related to early childhood.***

Goal #1: ECPAC partners will **support increased and equitable functioning of the early childhood system**, through visible advocacy, systems and partnerships development, thought leadership, and shared accountability.



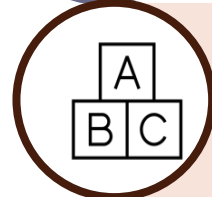
***Children and families experience high- quality services and supports that honor their needs, culture, and lived experiences.***

Goal #2: ECPAC partners will **champion high-quality, family-centered, and equitable programs and best practices** by actively supporting their adoption by partners, early care and education programs, and within internal processes.



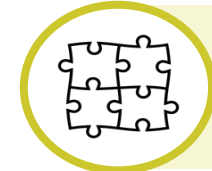
***Early childhood and family services and supports are increasingly equitable, economical, and easy to access.***

Goal #3: ECPAC partners will **promote greater access to family-centered resources** that support family stability, health and well-being, through **decreasing opportunity gaps and barriers**.



***Preschool and childcare options are more abundant than ever before, supporting improved kindergarten readiness and increased options for family stability.***

Goal #4: ECPAC partners will **support increased availability of and equitable access to quality preschool and childcare programs**, through efforts to increase funding, family-supportive policies, and workforce development opportunities.



***ECPAC staff, systems, and resources are strong and responsive.***

Goal #5: ECPAC will **fully address family and early childhood community needs** through appropriate governance, staffing and financial means, diversification of funding strategy, and equitable operations practices.

More details, including specific activities to support attainment of these goals and related strategies, as well as implicated financial resources, parties responsible for ensuring execution, and a proposed timeline, are included in a separate workplan. To access this document, or for more information, please visit: <https://www.ecpac.org/about-ecpac/vision-mission-goals/>.



### Systems

Community members, partners and service providers are better positioned to understand and act upon matters related to early childhood.



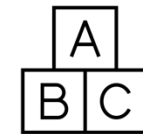
### Quality

Children and families experience services and supports that honor their needs, culture, and lived experiences.



### Accessibility

Early childhood and family services and supports are increasingly equitable, economical, and easy to access.



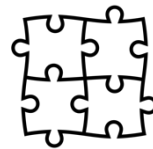
### Availability

Preschool and childcare options are more abundant than ever before, supporting improved kindergarten readiness and increased options for family stability.

Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC)

## Strategic Plan 2020-2024

# The Big Picture



### Capacity

ECPAC staff, systems, and resources are strong and responsive.

### Mission

Building a community where every young child, their family, and early childhood professionals can reach their full potential.

### Vision

All children, their families, and early childhood professionals are valued, healthy, and thriving.





Community members, partners, and service providers are better positioned to understand and act upon matters related to early childhood.



Goal #1: ECPAC partners will **support increased and equitable functioning of the early childhood system**, through visible advocacy, systems and partnerships development, thought leadership, and shared accountability.

Objective	Strategies
Increase <b>advocacy efforts</b> for improved and new policies at institutional, local, state, and national levels in alignment with ECPAC's Policy Agenda.	<p>Participate in discussions and decision-making activities related to topics impacting young children and families and early childhood professionals.</p> <p>Engage with elected officials and other key leaders to raise awareness, share relevant data, and present solutions or adjustments to policies.</p>
Increase <b>community exposure</b> to, understanding of and/or active participation with early childhood efforts and issues.	<p>Create and deploy shared campaigns that support resources, approaches, and policy for young children, families, and early childhood professionals, including implementing ECPAC's Communications Plan.</p> <p>Utilize existing public forums to educate community members and encourage public support for early childhood programs, services, and efforts.</p>
Increase <b>partner engagement</b> and collaboration toward improved system functioning and outcomes.	<p>Build and strengthen cross-sector partnerships that support increased access to affordable, high-quality comprehensive, culturally responsive services.</p> <p>Strengthen forums for early care and education programs, other early childhood and family service organizations, and caregivers to communicate and collaborate.</p>
Increase <b>family voice and community engagement</b> within early childhood systems and discussions.	<p>Build and expand opportunities for increased levels of family leadership, contribution, participation, and sense of community using ECPAC's Family Engagement and Leadership Framework (updating as needed).</p> <p>Create accessible and equitable opportunities for families to share their experiences and co-design/guide decisions through shared decision making/power.</p> <p>Elevate and support family voice in community conversations.</p>
Strengthen <b>shared accountability</b> , structures, and systems.	<p>Create collaborative evaluation systems to better understand community wide impact and to support partner accountability.</p> <p>Engage cross-sector and family partners in regular review and discussion of data collected to inform system and program decisions.</p>

Children and families experience high-quality services and supports that honor their needs, culture, and lived experiences.



Goal #2: ECPAC partners will **champion high-quality, family-centered, and equitable programs and best practices** by actively supporting their adoption by community organizations, early care and education programs, and within internal processes.

Objective	Strategies
<p><b>Advocate for and facilitate action</b> towards solutions that support diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and accessibility.</p>	<p>Implement <a href="#">ECPAC's Equity Impact Statement</a> in decision making with partners at all levels.</p> <p>Support community-wide discussions about co-creating strategies to improving equity in Adams County.</p> <p>Identify and openly challenge policies or practices that are intentionally or unintentionally discriminatory or do not improve upon existing inequities.</p>
<p>Strengthen available best-practice and equity-based <b>professional development opportunities</b> and support implementation.</p>	<p>Increase community-wide participation in informational sessions, and professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Promote and offer trainings to include equity-related offerings, such as cultural humility and responsiveness, trauma-informed care practices and principles, and identification and decrease of stigmas.</p> <p>Continue to provide informational resources in languages other than English.</p> <p>Work with community partners and organizations to integrate high-quality and equitable programming and systems.</p>

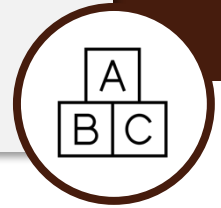
Early childhood and family services and supports are increasingly equitable, economical, and easy to access.



Goal #3: ECPAC partners will **promote greater access to equitable and family-centered resources** that support family stability, health and wellbeing, through **decreasing opportunity gaps and barriers**.

Objective	Strategies
<p>Increase <b>engagement</b> with family-centered resources.</p>	<p>Ensure families who participate in services guide decisions in planning, implementation, and evaluation.</p> <p>Engage partners to use social norms for help-seeking, positive parenting, and the protective factors and disseminate these through various communication mechanisms.</p> <p>Implement and increase awareness related to the following frameworks and approaches: the Two-Generation Approach, Social Determinants of Health, and the Strengthening Families Framework.</p> <p>Expand marketing efforts to increase visibility of and knowledge about available services.</p> <p>Incorporate trauma-informed design recommendations alongside partners and across resource hubs.</p>
<p>Increase <b>access to and availability</b> of resources that support family stability, health, and well-being.</p>	<p>Develop and expand resource hubs or available hub services, and opportunities for co-location, to increase access for underserved communities through strong partnerships, collective accountability, and shared resources.</p> <p>Expand quantity and flexibility of home- and community-based services to address gaps and barriers to access.</p> <p>Support partners to implement the common resource and referral platform and use community-level data to inform decision.</p> <p>Provide high-quality, culturally meaningful direct services and supports to families in order to fill gaps and address community needs, including resource navigation, classes and groups.</p>

Preschool and childcare options are more abundant than ever before, supporting improved kindergarten readiness and increased options for family stability.



Goal #4: ECPAC partners will **support increased availability of and equitable access to quality preschool and childcare** programs, through efforts to increase funding, family-supportive policies, and workforce development opportunities.

Objective	Strategies
<p>Increase <b>capacity and availability and affordability of quality</b> early childhood education and care.</p>	<p>Increase the number of childcare slots available in high-quality programs for all children in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (Community Dispersion of High Quality CCCAP and Children Served in High Quality Programs).</p> <p>Promote the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System and the Early Learning Developmental Guidelines/Playbook at least monthly.</p> <p>Promote high-quality early care and education – including strong business practices - through professional development and coaching.</p> <p>Increase Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System Engagement at a Level 2 or higher to 60% through high-quality coaching supports.</p> <p>Support ECE providers to create environments that foster social emotional development and address persistent behaviors that adults find challenging as well as for children with developmental delays, disabilities, and special needs through training and early childhood mental health consultation.</p> <p>Support families to have real-time data on available childcare openings.</p> <p>Increase the number of early care and education programs/slots available to serve infants and toddlers and universal preschool through advocacy and pre-licensing supports.</p>
<p>Increase advocacy efforts for the development of and access to <b>early childcare and education funding</b>.</p>	<p>Align efforts with the Local Coordinating Organization (LCO) and community partners regarding collaborative funding discussions for the birth-five early care and education system.</p> <p>Raise awareness for and promote investment in early care and education funding opportunities and initiatives towards both sustaining and/or expanding current programming and starting new programming.</p> <p>Advocate for equitable access to early care and education funding, reimbursement, and related policies.</p>
<p>Strengthen the early care and education (ECE) <b>workforce and pipeline</b>.</p>	<p>Refine and implement an Early Care and Education Career Navigation Model.</p> <p>Support investments into the ECE Workforce.</p> <p>Advocate for state and local policies that support the ECE workforce which support recruitment, retention, and compensation.</p>

## ECPAC staff, systems, and resources are strong and responsive.



Goal #5: ECPAC will **fully address family and early childhood community needs** through appropriate staffing, governance, and financial means, diversification of funding strategy, and equitable operations practices.

Objective	Strategies
Increase <b>alignment</b> of staff wellness with program needs and organizational resources.	Assess regularly staff duties and organizational structure to ensure compatibility with available resources, strategic priorities, program requirements, and staff strengths and interests. Enhance staff engagement in program decision-making processes and support opportunities for leadership. Cultivate a culture that supports transparency and all organizational values. Complete an annual staff survey to understand employee experience/perspective, alignment of organizational culture with ECPAC's core business and values, and to support engagement in continuous quality improvement accordingly. Position programming to be flexible, nimble, and responsive to internal and external factors.
Increase efficiency and effectiveness of <b>board governance</b> .	Complete biannual board assessment to inform and set and monitor improvement towards capacity and effectiveness goals. Strengthen fundraising capacity of Board and Resource Development Committee. Strengthen process for equitable decision-making.
Increase and diversify <b>funding streams</b> .	Prioritize pursuit of and advocacy for unrestricted and general operating funding. Develop an internal culture of fundraising to increase alternative funding sources (outside of grants). Develop new and enhance existing funding partnerships.
Increase <b>equitable</b> (diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility) <b>operations and practices</b> .	Review and update as needed internal policies, procedures and practices with an equity lens and support on-going implementation with all staff and board. Encourage all staff to participate in community-wide discussions or advocacy opportunities to advance equitable early childhood, family, and early childhood professionals' priorities. Increase diversity of staff and Board members to reflect community demographics. Implement ECPAC's Equity Impact Statement in internal decision making.
Implement ECPAC's <b>Communications Plan</b> .	Demonstrate data-driven outcomes and impact of ECPAC's leadership. Expand awareness of ECPAC's role within the early childhood ecosystem. Establish relationships with key influencers to enhance systems change work.



## Recommendations and Closing

ECPAC has a robust and celebrated history of being a leader and positive change catalyst within the early childhood field, not only in Adams County but statewide and nationwide. This trajectory is anticipated to continue to climb with the implementation of the strategic plan outlined above. To help stay focused on its goals and intended outcomes, it is recommended that ECPAC institute a “strategy screen” to help determine how future opportunities or partnerships may fit within its aims, including the following questions:

- Will this opportunity support the achievement of our vision?
- Will this opportunity support our mission?
- Does this opportunity align with all of our Partnership guiding principles?
- Does this opportunity align with all of our Organizational core values?
- Do we have the resources, staff capacity, *and* partnership engagement to be successful?

The answer to the above questions should be an unequivocal “yes.” If so, the following should also be considered:

- Will this opportunity negatively impact capacity or resources (e.g., staff, program delivery, etc.)?
- Would another partner be better equipped or positioned to take the lead?

If current staff would be unnecessarily taxed, or another partner may be a better fit, it is recommended that discussions continue before ECPAC commits to any additional activities that are outside the scope of this strategic plan. If ECPAC keeps these questions top of mind and continues its exceptional level of coordination with and consideration of all its stakeholders, the “big picture” for early childhood providers and families in 2024 looks bright.