ECPAC
EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP
OF ADAMS COUNTY

Strategic Plan
2024-2028

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Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County Strategic Plan (2024-2027)
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Strategic Plan Purpose and Overview

The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC) is the Early Childhood Council serving Adams County as established through legislation (HB07-1062; HB22-1295). ECPAC is a partnership of community stakeholders, including families, early care and education professionals, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities. ECPAC partners work together to cultivate an effective early childhood ecosystem for young children, their families, and early childhood professionals in Adams County, where every young child and family has equitable access to the high-quality and affordable services and supports they need to thrive.

The legislation charges ECPAC with improving systems serving young children and their families through ongoing and effective efforts toward equitable access to affordable, high-quality early learning, health/mental health, and family support and education services to ensure all families are school-ready. The ECPAC partnership strengthens connections between organizations, fills the gaps in resources, and increases the quality of care, services, support, and education for children and families.

ECPAC facilitates community-wide efforts to address complex social issues and increase school readiness for all children and families. This includes strategies to mitigate and prevent the impacts of challenging life situations, including, but not limited to, inequitable systems, poverty, child maltreatment, and low academic performance. Furthermore, ECPAC recognizes the importance of recruiting, retaining, and equitably compensating a diverse and qualified early childhood workforce that provides a quality support system for children and their families.

ECPAC accomplishes its mission and objectives through its core business:

Building and maintaining a strong partnership to promote shared accountability to improve child, family, and early childhood professionals' outcomes through engagement and alignment with the ECPAC community strategic plan, and continuous quality improvement based on equitable evaluation.

Fostering leadership with, between, and among community, family, and early childhood professionals.

Ensuring sufficient investments are available through shared resources, improved use of existing resources, and obtaining new resources.

Strengthening community investments and public support for young children, families, and early childhood professionals.

Providing professional development opportunities to improve the quality of early childhood supports and services, ensuring maximum community benefit.

Working together to address system and policy barriers to improved outcomes.

Mission Statement

Building a community where all young children, their families and early childhood professionals can reach their full potential.

Vision Statement

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

Core Values

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

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 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 provide comprehensive and collaborative services. The system has a comprehensive service array that is delivered in a collaborative manner.

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.

Report Summary

Agency Overview

The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC) ensures that Adams County is a place where all young children, their families, and early childhood professionals can thrive. This is accomplished through a community-based systems approach coupled with providing direct services.

ECPAC fills essential roles in Adams County's early childhood system: community convener, coalescing and aligning many service agencies and breaking down systemic barriers; providing supports for the ECE profession; offering family services navigation and parenting classes; and early childhood mental health consultation.

ECPAC's partnership-driven philosophy ensures a comprehensive and robust approach to supporting young children's development in their community, homes, and early care and education settings, towards ECPAC's ultimate goal that all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

ECAPC is committed to fostering an inclusive community where every individual is entitled to live in a safe, thriving, and discrimination-free environment. To this end, the Equity Impact Statement is essential in decision-making with this commitment.

Report Summary

Strategic Planning Process and Intent

In July 2023, the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC) contracted with Vibrant Iris Consulting (VIC) to provide comprehensive strategic planning services building on the highly successful previous strategic plan spanning 2020-2024.

This process was grounded in community and stakeholder engagement with the following essential parties:

- Families with young children
- Partner agencies, including nonprofit & government entities
- Licensed Early Care and Education (ECE) centers and Family Child Care Homes (FCCH)
- ECPAC staff, leadership, and board of directors

Through culturally appropriate facilitated focus groups and surveys, VIC and ECPAC gathered data regarding the experiences, perceptions, needs, and desires of families with young children and ECE provider communities. ECPAC's leadership, staff, and board reviewed raw and synthesized data throughout the strategic planning process to ensure accurate interpretations of emerging data.

This document provides the principle goal-oriented framework and programmatic approaches to guide ECPAC's work from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2028. This document has been carefully crafted to embody and serve ECPAC visionarily and practically, ensuring stability and strength for young children, families, and early childhood professionals regardless of the ever-changing service landscape, including but not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022) and the launch of Colorado's Universal Prekindergarten (fall 2023).

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Strategic Goals & Outcomes 2024-2028

Goal 1. ECPAC partners will support an equitable and functioning early childhood system, through visible advocacy, systems and partnerships development, thought leadership, and shared accountability.

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

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

Outcome: Children and families experience high-quality services, supports, and early care and education that honors their needs, culture, and lived experiences.

Goal 3. ECPAC partners will promote equitable access to family-centered resources that support family stability, health, and well-being.

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

Goal 4. ECPAC partners will support availability of and equitable access to quality Early Care and Education (ECE) programs.

Outcome: Early Care and Education (ECE) options are more abundant than ever before, supporting improved school readiness and increased options for family stability.

Goal 5. ECPAC will support family and early childhood community needs through diversification of funding strategies, and strategic and equitable operational practices.

Outcome: ECPAC staff, systems, and resources are strong and responsive

Goal 1

ECPAC partners will support an equitable and functioning early childhood system, through visible advocacy, systems and partnerships development, thought leadership, and shared accountability.

Outcome:

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

Objective 1

Advocate for increased awareness of the importance of early childhood and related efforts, including improved or new policies at institutional, local, state, and national levels in alignment with ECPAC's Policy Agenda.

1. Participate in discussions and decision-making activities related to topics impacting young children and families, and early childhood professionals.
2. Use ECPAC's Communications Plan to create and deploy shared campaigns that support resources, approaches, policies and awareness of issues impacting young children, families, and early childhood professionals.
3. Engage with elected officials and other key leaders to raise awareness, share relevant data, and present solutions or adjustments to policies.
4. Take action on local, state, and national policies that support young children, families, and early childhood professionals.
5. Advocate for equitable access to early care and education funding, reimbursement, and related policies.
6. Advocate for and facilitate action towards solutions that support diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and accessibility.

Objective 2

Support **partner engagement** and collaboration toward improved system functioning and outcomes.

1. Build and strengthen cross-sector partnerships that support shared accountability for increased access to affordable, high-quality comprehensive, culturally-meaningful services and supports.
2. Facilitate and participate in partner collaboratives that work to have demonstrable impact on complex social issues related to young children, families, and early childhood professionals.
3. Engage cross-sector partners and family leaders in regular review and discussion of data to inform system and program decisions.

Objective 3

Support **family voice and community engagement** within early childhood systems and discussions.

1. Build and expand opportunities for family leadership, contribution, participation, and sense of community using ECPAC's Family Engagement and Leadership Framework (updating as needed).
2. Elevate and support families' lived experience and shared power in community conversations.
3. Create accessible and equitable opportunities for families to share their experiences and co-create decisions through shared decision making and power.

Goal 2

ECPAC will champion high-quality, family-centered, and equitable programs and best practices with partners, early care and education programs, and within internal processes.

Outcome:

Children and families experience high-quality services, supports, and early care and education that honors their needs, culture, and lived experiences.

Objective 1

Demonstrate affirmation and support of ECPAC's **Equity Impact Statement.**

1. Implement equity-based collaboration, evaluation, and communication with community partners, families, and stakeholders in decision-making processes.
2. Offer provisions for impacted stakeholders to authentically and actively engage in decision-making.

Objective 2

Strengthen utilization of **best practices** throughout child and family services.

1. Promote and offer professional development opportunities that increase the use of best practices to achieve equitable access to services and supports and positive experiences for children and families.
2. Provide responsive informational resources in languages other than English to match the community's current and evolving language needs.

Objective 3

Increase the availability of **high-quality ECE**.

1. Provide training and mental health consultation for ECE providers to create environments that foster social-emotional development and address persistent behaviors that adults find challenging, including special populations such as children with developmental delays, disabilities, and special needs.
2. Provide coaching and resources to ECE programs to promote high-quality learning environments, including but not limited to QRIS (refresh) and UPK quality preschool standards. *(updated 7/1/26)*
3. Provide training to ECE educators to increase knowledge and skills that promote high-quality care and education.
4. Increase awareness of the importance of high-quality care.

Objective 4

Strengthen **resource and referral** pathways to ensure families have access to services.

1. Increase the Adams County Resource and Referral Platform use by service programs and families.
2. Ensure and increase internal referrals between direct service programs.
3. Facilitate partnerships between service organizations to increase warm handoffs and referral connections.

Goal 3

ECPAC partners will promote equitable access to family-centered resources that support family stability, health, and well-being.

Outcome:

Early childhood and family services and supports are equitable, economical, and accessible.

Objective 1

Promote **engagement** with family-centered resources.

1. Provide opportunities for families participating in services to guide planning, implementation, and evaluation decisions.

2. Promote social norms messaging for help-seeking, positive parenting, and protective factors and disseminate these through various communication mechanisms.

3. Implement best practices such as the Two-Generation and Trauma-Informed Approaches and the Social Determinants of Health and Strengthening Families Frameworks.

4. Increase the visibility of and knowledge of available services.

Objective 2

Promote **access to and availability** of resources that support family stability, health, and well-being.

1. Explore opportunities for shared initiatives and service delivery to increase access for underserved communities through strong partnerships, collective accountability, and shared resources.

2. Offer flexible home- and community-based services to address gaps and barriers to access.

3. Support partners in implementing the common resource and referral platform and using community-level data to inform decisions.

4. Provide high-quality, culturally meaningful direct services and supports to families, including resource navigation, classes, and groups, to fill gaps and address community needs.

Goal 4

ECPAC partners will support the availability of and equitable access to quality Early Care and Education (ECE) programs.

Outcome:

Early Care and Education (ECE) options are more available and affordable, improve school readiness, and increase options for family stability.

Objective 1

Increase **capacity** of quality early care and education programming. (italics required by legislation)

1. 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)* in collaboration with Adams County CCCAP program.

2. Provide assistance to families to find and access child care and preschool options. *(updated 7/1/26)*

3. Raise awareness for and promote investment in ECE funding opportunities and initiatives toward sustaining and/or expanding current and new programming.

4. Through coaching and navigation services, support strong business practices and ensure programs are connected to the necessary resources to operate their businesses successfully.

Objective 2

Foster the delivery of **high-quality** ECE.

(italics required by legislation)

1. Increase Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System Engagement at a Level 2 or higher to 60% through high-quality coaching support.

2. *Promote the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System and the Early Learning Developmental Guidelines/Playbook at least monthly.*

3. Support high-quality early care and education through professional development, coaching, and navigation.

4. Support 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.

5. Provide relevant opportunities to build a sense of community among all providers.

Objective 3

Strengthen the ECE workforce and pipeline.

1. Provide career navigation to early childhood educators and those interested in the profession.

2. Work with local and state partners to increase accessibility and affordability of workforce support.

3. Advocate for investments and state and local policies that support the ECE workforce with recruitment, retention, and compensation

4. Collaborate with local stakeholders, including ECE providers, to build on existing knowledge and improve action toward local workforce initiatives.

Goal 5

ECPAC will support family and early childhood community needs through the diversification of funding strategies and strategic and equitable operational practices.

Outcome:

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

Objective 1

Support **alignment** of staff wellness with program needs and organizational resources.

1. Assess staff duties and organizational structure regularly to ensure compatibility with available resources, strategic priorities, program requirements, and staff strengths and interests.
2. Enhance staff engagement in program decision-making processes and support diverse opportunities for growth and leadership.
3. Enhance staff's programmatic knowledge across ECPAC teams through onboarding and cross-team activities.
4. Cultivate a culture of transparency, internal communication, and relationship building aligning with organizational values.
5. Complete an annual staff survey to understand employee experience and perspective, align organizational culture with ECPAC's core business and values, and support engagement in continuous quality improvement accordingly.

Objective 2

Support efficiency and effectiveness of **board governance.**

1. Complete biannual board assessment to inform, set, and monitor improvement towards capacity and effectiveness goals.
2. Strengthen capacity to support fundraising events and activities.
3. Strengthen the process for equitable decision-making.
4. Prioritize board membership recruitment that is reflective of community demographics.

Objective 3

Support **equitable operations and practices** through diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility initiatives and practices.

1. Implement the Equity Impact Statement for internal decision-making.
2. Use the staff and board diversity surveys to inform strategies for improvement.
3. Apply an equity lens when conducting ongoing reviews and subsequent updates to internal policies, procedures, and practices for staff and board.
4. Encourage all staff to participate in training, community-wide discussions, or advocacy opportunities to advance equitable early childhood, family, and early childhood professionals' priorities and practice internal operations with an equity lens.
5. Implement equitable hiring practices to ensure staff are reflective of community demographics.
6. Ensure evaluation processes address disparities, foster a culture of equity and inclusion, measure progress, identify areas for improvement, and drive meaningful action.

Objective 4

Diversify funding streams.

1. Prioritize the pursuit of and advocacy for unrestricted and general operating funds.
2. Explore earned income opportunities and revenue-generating activities aligned with the organization's mission.
3. Support an internal culture of fundraising to increase alternative funding sources (outside of grants).
4. Develop new and existing funding partnerships.
5. Increase donations through the Child Care Tax Credit through improved relationships with businesses.

ECPAC is pleased to unveil this updated strategic plan and continue its work as a local early childhood leader. ECPAC believes that cultivating an effective early childhood ecosystem requires a whole community collaborative impact and that we create better outcomes for each child, each family, our community, and our state when we invest in early childhood as a whole community.

As the ECPAC partnership continues to strengthen systems, serve families, and support early childhood professionals through the stated goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes in this document, the following questions can serve as a guide for decision-making processes over the next three-year period:

- How might this opportunity support ECPAC's vision?
- How might this opportunity support ECPAC's mission?
- How might this opportunity align our partners and the guiding principles?
- How does this opportunity align with ECPAC's core values?
- Do we have or can we access the resources needed for this engagement to be successful?
- Will this opportunity negatively impact current capacity or resources (e.g., staff, program delivery)?
- Is there another partner that might be better equipped or positioned to take the lead?

If ECPAC staff would be unnecessarily taxed or another partner may be a better fit, discussions will continue before ECPAC commits to any additional activities outside the scope of this strategic plan. ECPAC will keep these questions top of mind and continue an exceptional level of coordination with and consideration of all stakeholders.

ECPAC is excited about the next 4 years and looks forward to partnering with organizations, families, and governmental entities as well as other key stakholders to ensure Adams County is a great place to raise children and for early childhood professionals to work!