

# ECLC

*Early Childhood Leadership Commission*

## Annual Report

2015



### **PRESENTED TO:**

Governor Hickenlooper, Senate Education Committee, Senate Health and Human Services Committee, House Education Committee, House Public Health Care and Human Services Committee, and House Health, Insurance and Environment Committee



# Letter from Co-Chairs

Dear Governor Hickenlooper and Colorado General Assembly,

The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) is proud to present our fourth Annual Report. We would like to sincerely thank you all for your commitment to making early childhood a top priority.

The ECLC is the trusted and proactive champion for high quality, outcome-focused learning and development, health and well-being, and family support and education. Our focus rests upon programs and services for pregnant women and children from birth through age eight in Colorado.

According to 2014 survey results from a national polling group, 77 percent of Colorado voters believe that investments in early childhood programs will help strengthen the economy in the short and long term. Ensuring children get a strong start in life is a top priority for Coloradans, second only to increasing jobs and economic growth, and well ahead of reducing the tax burden on families. This makes our charge even more vital.

We have worked collaboratively over the course of the year to identify opportunities for, and barriers to, the coordination of early childhood policies and programs. In 2015, some of our successes included:

- Securing resources and establishing two public private partnerships to revise the Early Childhood Colorado Framework and to coordinate and highlight parent and caregiver awareness and engagement efforts across the state
- Providing leadership and advice to the Office of Early Childhood, Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) on rules needed to implement HB 14-1317, which reforms the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)
- Serving as the state advisory council on early childhood by advising on federal grant applications and potential early childhood policy

This report reflects the ECLC's work and accomplishments over 2015. We are committed to ongoing partnerships among state departments and collaboration with families, providers, stakeholders and advocates across the state. The ECLC will continue to prioritize early childhood as the most important investment in Colorado's future and to ensure that all children are valued, healthy and thriving. We look forward to our continued work with the Colorado executive and legislative branches on behalf of Colorado children and their families.

Sincerely,



**Lt. Governor Joseph A. Garcia**

ECLC Co-Chair



**Anna Jo Haynes**

ECLC Co-Chair



**Barbara Grogan**

ECLC Co-Chair



## About the Early Childhood Leadership Commission

The ECLC was originally established in 2010 and reauthorized in 2013 for five years through HB 13-1117. The composition of the Commission is twenty individuals representing a full spectrum of advocates and leaders, including parents, early childhood professionals, Head Start, school districts, local municipalities, foundations, nonprofits, businesses and five state departments: Education, Health Care Policy and Financing, Higher Education, Human Services, and Public Health and Environment. As Colorado's state advisory council for early childhood, the role of the Commission is to be a statewide leader, subject matter expert and champion of best and promising practices throughout the state.

### **THE ECLC IS STATUTORILY CHARGED TO:**

- Assist public and private agencies in coordinating efforts to enhance alignment, which includes collaboration among five state departments.
- Advise and make recommendations to the Office of Early Childhood, CDHS.
- Develop strategies and monitor efforts to increase the access, quality and equity of services and supports on behalf of pregnant women and children birth through age eight.



# 2015 ECLC accomplishments:

- Secured resources and led the stakeholder process to update the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework*
- Developed [earlychildhoodframework.org](http://earlychildhoodframework.org) to house additional *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* resources including a Spanish version of the *Framework* and community communication toolkit
- Advised the Office of Early Childhood, CDHS on future opportunities for quality investments, and implementation and evaluation of Colorado Shines
- Made recommendations to the Colorado State Board of Human Services on the initial rule package required to release funding to local communities and implement Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) reform
- Established a public private partnership and began to convene committees focused on developing strategies to highlight parent and caregiver awareness and engagement efforts
- Served as a champion for implementation of kindergarten readiness assessments as outlined in CAP4K, which included ongoing testimony to the Colorado State Board of Education
- Advised the Early Childhood School Readiness Legislative Commission on best and promising practices related to early childhood policy as outlined in HB 13-1007
- Served as the state advisory council by advising on federal grant applications related to pregnant women and children birth through age eight and submitting letters of support required to apply for those grants
- Established recommendations for Prenatal to Age Three (PN3) program and policy priorities and seated a Young Child Wellness Council to guide implementation of Project LAUNCH
- Strengthened the infrastructure of the ECLC by restructuring committees and leveraging private resources for ongoing expenses

# To strengthen Colorado's reputation as a state for children, we must:



**Connect and empower families.**



**Make data informed decisions.**



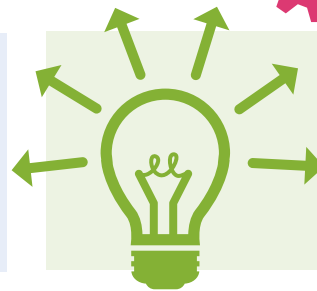
**Encourage public private partnerships.**



**Build capacity and sustainable business practices.**



**Pursue quality and consumer affordability.**



**Promote and share knowledge.**



**Develop and retain the workforce.**



# FUNDAMENTALS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

- Strong Partnerships
- Sufficient Investments
- Sound Policy
- Robust Public Engagement
- Shared Accountability
- Effective Leadership
- Relevant Education Opportunities



# Investing in Early Childhood Education Is an Essential Priority



In a 2014 poll, majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents surveyed believed in supporting early childhood program investments in the state – including voluntary parent coaching, teacher training, and expanding access to early learning or child care.



In 2015, 89 percent of voters from a national poll believed that it is important to “[make] sure children get a strong start in life so they perform better in school and succeed in their careers”.



In 2014, 79 percent of Colorado voters supported investments in education opportunities for new parents.



In 2014, three of four voters said, “investing in early childhood education will help Colorado’s economy”.





# Benefits of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Approach



## ▶ CHILDREN

- Reach their developmental potential
- Are ready to succeed in school and career

## ▶ FAMILIES

- Have increased access to environments that are safe, stable and supportive for children
- Are able to focus more on their education and career

## ▶ BUSINESSES

- Experience less employee turnover and absenteeism and higher productivity
- Support the development of the future workforce

## ▶ COLORADO

- Generates savings from lower remedial education costs and crime rates
- Sees reduced dependence on social benefit programs and increased local and state tax revenues



# Highlights from the ECLC Committees



## PROGRAM QUALITY AND ALIGNMENT COMMITTEE

The ECLC believes that the coordination and alignment of early childhood programs is important to increase access, quality and equity within the comprehensive early childhood system. As such, the Program Quality and Alignment Committee identifies opportunities for, and barriers to, the alignment of standards, rules, policies and procedures. This provides more efficient and effective services and supports within and across learning and development, health and well-being, and family support and education.

In order to align efforts within a system, one must define the system. In 2015, the ECLC led the process to update the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* originally created in 2008. A Framework Steering Committee, which included cross-sector experience and expertise, was formed to guide all content and graphic revisions. Hundreds of Colorado stakeholders participated via surveys, focus groups and meetings to inform the revision process. Since the *Framework* release in September 2015, nearly 10,000 copies have been distributed to local communities, and there have been 597 visits to [earlychildhoodframework.org](http://earlychildhoodframework.org), which hosts comprehensive resources. Stories of statewide adoption continue to surface as communities use the *Framework* to guide planning, mobilize partnerships and develop resources.

The Program Quality and Alignment Committee also engaged the:

- **Prenatal to Age 3 Subcommittee**, which recommended program and policy priorities to ensure Colorado’s infants and toddlers, parents and caregivers – including expectant mothers and fathers – experience optimal health, learning and development, as well as accessible and coordinated high quality resources and services that meet their needs.
- **Young Child Wellness Council**, which seated subject matter experts to provide guidance to Project LAUNCH, a \$4 million five-year federal cooperative agreement focusing on all children entering school with the social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills they need to succeed.
- **Early Childhood Professional Development Advisory Committee**, which is committed to preparing and supporting highly effective, caring and diverse early learning professionals. Work included aligning Colorado’s Early Childhood Competencies with PreK-12 teacher licensing, higher education teacher preparation programs, professional development and strategies for recruitment, retention and compensation.

“[The *Framework*] has been critically relevant in all aspects of our systems building work, particularly in the area of strategic planning...all council members, from newbies to veteran members, can grasp these fundamentals and thus participate at a high level of systems-building literacy.”

-Vangi McCoy (Executive Director, Montelores Early Childhood Council)

## Future Priorities

In 2016, the Program Quality and Alignment Committee commits to:

- Implement Phase 2 of the *Framework*, which includes expanding the website to highlight programs and initiatives across the state.
- Update the Colorado Early Learning Professional Development System Plan originally created in 2010 to compliment the *Framework*.
- Review and make recommendations to the Office of Early Childhood, CDHS on the Child Care Development Block Grant State Plan.

# ▶ EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNICATION COLLABORATIVE

Interactions between children and adults lay the foundation for a host of outcomes necessary for children to reach their developmental potential and be successful throughout their lifetimes. Ensuring parents and caregivers are aware and engaged in their children's development is very important for Colorado's future. In 2015, the ECLC designed the Early Childhood Communication Collaborative charged with coordinating and expanding existing and emerging parent and caregiver awareness and engagement efforts in Colorado.

## **The goals of the Early Childhood Communication Collaborative are to:**

- Raise awareness of the important role parents and caregivers have on child development.
- Highlight the number and variety of parent and caregiver engagement efforts.
- Connect parents and caregivers to a range of existing resources and tools.
- Enhance parent and caregiver understanding and appreciation of their roles in child development.

The ECLC believes strongly that coordinating and highlighting parent and caregiver awareness and engagement efforts will best be achieved through a public private partnership that includes businesses, government, foundations and nonprofits. This public

private partnership exists to identify and leverage current and emerging efforts and maximize information and resources for parents and caregivers. The ECLC will continue to foster this public private partnership and garner commitment from leaders within the early childhood system to ensure children and families benefit from this collaborative communication effort across Colorado.

## Future Priorities

In 2016, the Early Childhood Communication Collaborative will:

- Convene leaders at all levels to provide guidance and input on the effort.
- Create a mechanism to promote the continued sharing of tools, resources and strategies to improve the coordination of communication efforts within Colorado.
- Encourage all who connect with new parents to incorporate parent and caregiver engagement strategies and messages into their programs and outreach.
- Develop a collective identifier similar to "Colorado Proud" or "Got Milk" to align existing and emerging parent and caregiver awareness and engagement efforts .



## DATA COMMITTEE

The ECLC strongly believes in the value of aggregate data as necessary to better understand populations across the state, identify opportunities to create efficiencies within programs, and across departments and encourage sufficient public and private investments in the early childhood system. The Data Committee encourages appropriately collected data that are analyzed in aggregate with proper confidentiality safeguards. When made available, data informs strategic planning and evaluation by early childhood partners working in a variety of capacities and settings.

With leadership and direction from Data Committee co-chairs and community partners, the ECLC has focused much of its recent work on two important efforts. Since 2013, the Office of Early Childhood, CDHS has been focused on building the infrastructure and data systems necessary to support the rollout and implementation of Colorado Shines. Out of a commitment to continuous quality improvement and fidelity to the model, the effectiveness of the QRIS and the PDIS will undergo evaluation to determine whether:

- Different rating levels reflect meaningful differences in the quality of licensed child care classrooms and programs.
- Early childhood professionals participate in, advance through and understand the professional development system.

Convened by the Data Committee, community partners spent months developing a logic model and research questions to inform a request for proposal released by the Office of Early Childhood, CDHS. A national vendor, Child Trends, was awarded this contract and is scheduled to complete this validation work in 2017.

The Data Committee also focused on the further implementation of SB 08-212, referred to as CAP4K, which requires all children in publicly funded kindergarten to be assessed using a state approved kindergarten readiness assessment. The statewide assessment provides:

- Information to parents and caregivers about their children's development.
- Facts to support individualized teacher instruction.
- Baseline data to inform investments.

- Aggregate data to local communities focused on improvement efforts.

Additionally, the ECLC has been working with CDE and the Colorado State Board of Education to address challenges and promote the full implementation of the kindergarten readiness assessment across Colorado.

## Future Priorities

In 2016, the Data Committee plans to address the following:

- Review first year Colorado Shines implementation data to be proactive champions of Colorado's nationally recognized model
- Advocate for the importance of kindergarten readiness assessments as a way to support children's school success
- Determine, with partner input, what data are available to measure progress toward *Early Childhood Colorado Framework* outcomes





## LEGISLATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

The ECLC believes sound early childhood policy is essential to ensure young children reach their full developmental potential and are ready to succeed in school and life. Accordingly, the Legislative Implementation Task Force has spent much of the past two years partnering with the Office of Early Childhood, CDHS and local leaders to support and guide the implementation of HB 14-1317. The vision outlined in HB 14-1317 provided an opportunity to take bold steps forward to reform CCCAP, the child care subsidy program for low-income families administered by the Office of Early Childhood, CDHS. This piece of legislation is intended to increase the affordability of child care, ease the burdens for working parents, and promote sustainable business practices in child care centers. Implementation has also focused on two-generation strategies where children receive high quality care, while their parents focus on working toward self-sufficiency.

In an effort to meet the intent of this complex, progressive legislation, the Office of Early Childhood, CDHS asked the ECLC and County Human Services leaders to be thought partners along with early childhood providers and advocates in a joint task force. The Joint Task Force was charged with making recommendations to the Colorado State Board of Human Services on policies, rules and funding allocations to implement all provisions. Though no small task, the expertise and dedication demonstrated by the Joint Task Force is grounded in promising practices and the commitment to overcome barriers often experienced by low-income families searching for quality child care.

In order to support this vulnerable population, the Joint Task Force created a place to have critical conversations necessary to better understand how to:

- Make child care more affordable for the lowest income families and allow families to keep more of their income as their wages increase by adjusting the co-pay structure.
- Address continuity of care for children even when parents' work schedules are not routine.
- Ease program administrative burdens for parents, county human services offices and child care providers.
- Incentivize and support providers to offer, and parents to select, higher quality care.

In 2014, the Joint Task Force reached consensus on several recommendations for necessary CCCAP rule revisions because of these conversations. The Colorado State Board of Human Services approved the first rule package on December 1, 2014. While still in its initial stages of implementation, signs of positive impact from implementation of HB 14-1317 are beginning to emerge.



## Future Priorities

In 2016, the Legislative Implementation Task Force plans to:

- Submit additional recommendations to the Colorado State Board of Human Services for consideration in a second rule package to support the continued implementation of HB 14-1317, which includes tiered reimbursement.
- Work with the ECLC Data Committee to review and evaluate program level data, which will inform continuous improvement.



**COLORADO  
SHINES**

**START EARLY  
START STRONG  
QUALITY EARLY LEARNING**

## Colorado Shines Story

Colorado Shines is a partnership between CDHS and CDE. CDHS is leading the overall effort and focusing on the development and implementation of the state's child care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The QRIS is designed to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs by rating programs on a Level 1 – 5 scale. Colorado is the fifth state in the nation to embed licensing into the QRIS, requiring that 100 percent of licensed child care centers, preschools and family child care homes register in Colorado Shines to become a Level 1.

CDE is designing and implementing the Professional Development Information System (PDIS). The PDIS is an online learning system and workforce registry that credentials early childhood professionals, supports their professional development planning and connects them with opportunities for ongoing professional development. Additionally, the PDIS informs the QRIS workforce scoring elements, a requirement for Level 2 and above.

The QRIS officially launched in February 2015. Within the first six months, 14 percent of licensed programs received a Level 3-5 rating, which is commendable and very exciting. To date, there are:

- 4,643 licensed child care centers, preschools and family child care homes participating in Colorado Shines, which breaks down into the following quality rating levels:
  - Level 1 – 3,556
  - Level 2 – 452
  - Level 3 – 277
  - Level 4 – 358

The PDIS officially launched in April of 2015 and to date:

- 13,746 early childhood professionals have registered in the PDIS with over 4,692 early childhood credentials awarded and 42,278 hours of online training completed

# The ECLC applauds state department efforts to support young children and their families.

- Through the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP), the **Department of Education** supported access to high-quality preschool for 26,937 eligible children in school district settings, local child care centers, community preschools, and Head Start programs. In 2015, CPP served 425 children under age three, 5375 three-year-olds, 15,869 four-year-olds, and 5304 kindergartners.
- The **Department of Health Care Policy and Financing** has been working to reduce the number of uninsured children. According to the latest Community Health Access Survey released in September 2015, only about 2 percent of children in Colorado remained uninsured. As of November 30, 2015, Colorado Medicaid served 526,374 children. Medicaid averages 22,500 developments screenings for children 0-5 each quarter. As of November 30, 2015, the Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) served 46,033 children.
- One of the “Wildly Important Goals” of the **Department of Human Services (CDHS)** is to increase the number of children, under five years old, who utilize CCCAP and are enrolled in a child care facility rated as Levels 3-5 in Colorado Shines. Investments in this effort increased enrollment from 21.7 percent to 31.0 percent or more, by June 30, 2015. CDHS not only met its 2015 goal, but has consistently exceeded it, most recently reporting 34.6 percent.
- The **Department of Public Health and Environment** has been working to increase the number of women screened and referred for treatment of pregnancy-related depression. Progress has been made from 72.6 percent of mothers reporting their provider spoke to them about what to do when experiencing depressive symptoms in 2009 to 78.9 percent in 2013 (PRAMS). Working with the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting programs at CDHS, providers increased screening rates from 80 percent to 93 percent among home visitation participants.



# The ECLC Recognizes the Contributions of the Following Organizations:

- Buell Foundation
- Center for the Study of Social Policy
- Chambers Family Fund
- Child and Family Policy Center
- Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- Children's Hospital
- Civic Canopy
- Clayton Early Learning
- Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children
- Colorado Association for Family Child Care
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Colorado Department of Human Services
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing
- Colorado Head Start Association
- Colorado Health Foundation
- Colorado Parent and Child Foundation
- Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
- Colorado Trust
- Cydney & Tom Marsico Family Foundation
- Denver Early Childhood Council
- Denver Health
- Denver Preschool Program
- Early Childhood Colorado Partnership
- Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance
- Early Childhood Policy Advisory Committee
- Early Childhood School Readiness Legislative Commission
- Early Childhood Sub-Policy Advisory Committee
- Early Milestones Colorado
- Education Commission of the States
- Elementive Marketing Solutions
- Executives Partnering to Invest in Children
- Family, Friend and Neighbor Network
- Family Resource Center Association
- Mapleton Public Schools
- Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy
- Mile High Montessori Early Learning Centers
- Mile High United Way
- Offices of the Governor and Lt. Governor
- Peak Creative
- Piton Foundation
- Qualistar Colorado
- Rose Community Foundation
- Sector Brands
- Summit County Government
- Telemundo Denver
- University of Colorado Denver
- University of Denver
- Valley Settlement Project
- Walton Family Foundation
- ZERO TO THREE

*We regret if we unintentionally omitted an organization that provided the staff as volunteers to advance the work of the ECLC or provided consulting services for our projects.*



# The ECLC Recognizes the Contributions of the Following Committee Co-Chairs:

Anne Anderson

Anna Jo Haynes

Letty Bass

Charlotte Brantley

Ann Bruce

Melissa Colsman

Thomas Davidson

Lt. Governor Josep A. Garcia

Barbara Grogan

Pamela Harris

Elsa Holguin

Marie Hueston

Rebecca Kantor

Nancie Linville

Ginger Maloney

Tom Massey

Phuonglan Nguyen

Susan Steele

Karen Trierweiler



# 2015 Early Childhood Leadership Commission

## Co-Chairs

Lt. Governor Joseph A. Garcia, Executive Director – Department of Higher Education

Barbara Grogan, Retired Founder and CEO – Western Industrial Contractors

Anna Jo Haynes, CEO/President Emeritus – Mile High Montessori Early Learning Centers

## Commissioners

Anne Anderson, Senior Program Officer of Family-Directed Giving – Walton Family Foundation

Letty Bass, Executive Director – Chambers Family Fund

Charlotte Brantley, President/CEO – Clayton Early Learning

Charlotte Ciancio, Superintendent of Schools – Mapleton Public Schools

Doug Clements, Executive Director – Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy

Melissa Colman, Executive Director of the Teaching and Learning Unit – Department of Education

Thomas Davidson, Commissioner – Summit County

Richard Garcia, Executive Director – Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition

Gerri Gomez Howard, Principal – Gomez Howard Group

Sheila Groneman, Head Start Collaboration Director - Department of Human Services

Elsa Holguin, Senior Program Officer – Rose Community Foundation

Julie Krow, Deputy Executive Director For Community Partnerships – Department of Human Services

Tom Massey, Deputy Executive Director of Policy and Communications – Department of Health Care Policy & Financing

Anna Robinson, Parent Representative

Susan Steele, Executive Director – Buell Foundation

Karen Trierweiler, Director of the Center for Healthy Families and Communities – Department of Public Health and Environment

Amy Wineland, Director – Summit County Public Health

## Ex-Officio Members

Patrick Hamill, Chairman and CEO – Oakwood Homes

Cindy Schulz, Executive Director – Cydney and Tom Marsico Family Foundation

Mary Anne Snyder, Director – Office of Early Childhood, Department of Human Services

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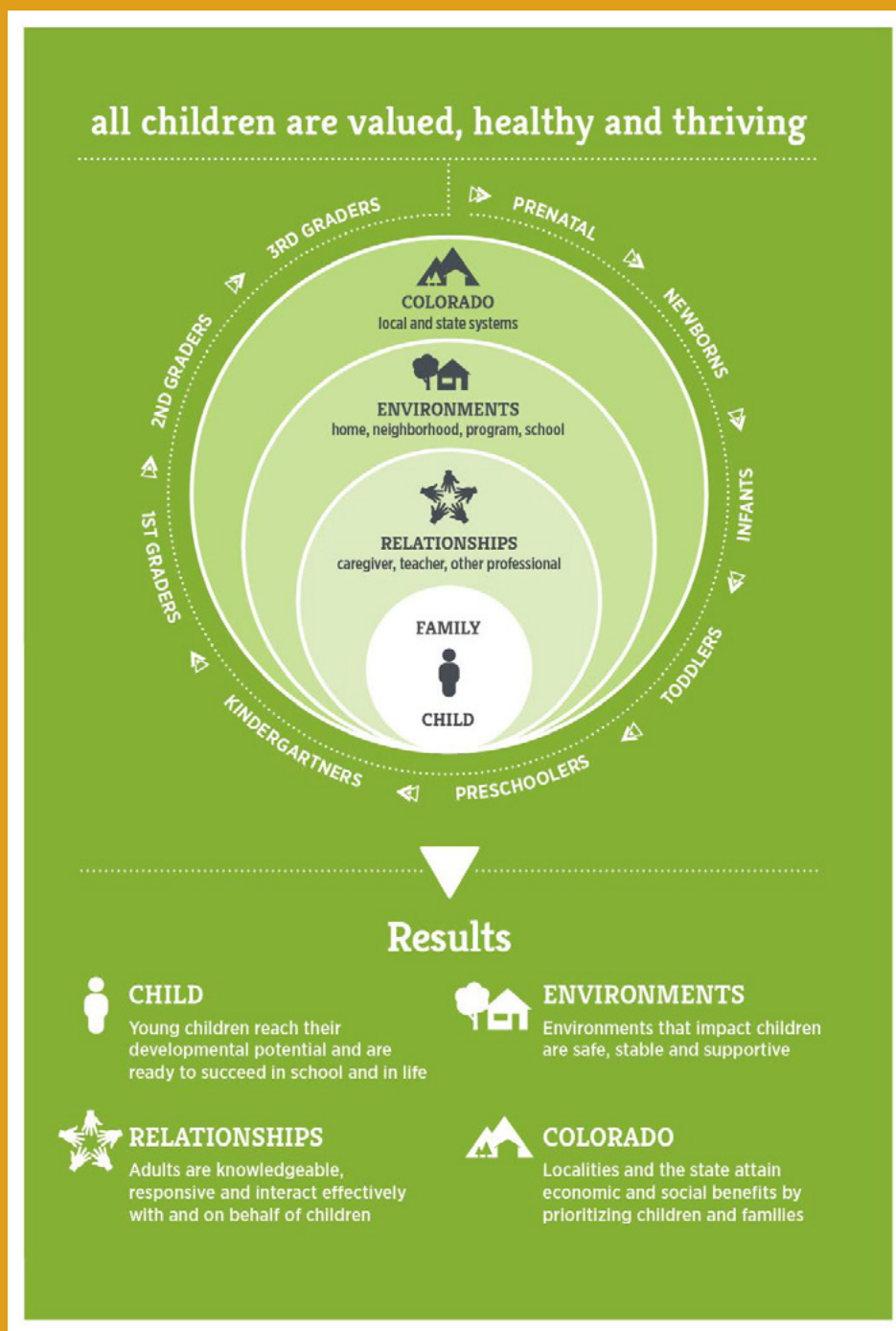
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# Early Childhood Colorado Framework, 2015



# ECLC

Early Childhood Leadership Commission

For questions relating to the ECLC, please visit [www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org](http://www.earlychildhoodcolorado.org)