



**Pueblo Early  
Childhood Council**

# MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 25, 2021 VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

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## Mission Statement

*Pueblo Early Childhood Council is a diverse, active network that collaborates and advocates to enrich and strengthen the lives of children, families, and the community.*

### Attendance:

Angie Shehorn-PECC/Children First  
Wendy Romero-Health Solutions  
Dayna Berry-Healthy Family Connections  
Teresa Mathews-PECC/Children First  
Sarah Martinez-PDPHE  
Emilee Alcon-Catholic Charities  
Renee Gust-PCC/ECE  
Mark Valdez- Pueblo Work Force  
Rhonda Adamson-ESS/Child Find  
Valerie Maldonado-CDI/SCCOHS  
Brenda Rodriguez-PECC/Children First  
Raelynn Martinez-District 60/SFWC  
Rhonda Duskey-Kochis-CDI/SCCOHS  
Tracy Thatcher-Bluesky Community Outreach  
Kirsten Dees-Rawlings Library

Paula Arellano- PECC/Children First  
Molly Milusnic-PECC/Children First  
Justin Gage-PDPHE  
Pamela Doyle-Healthy Family Connections  
Deanne Sandoval-Early Learning Ventures  
Lindsey Dunbar-PDPHE  
Gerald Cassanova-Gallegos-Safe Baby Court  
Rita Samora-ECMS  
Mary Jo DePriest-CDE  
Anna Neal-Safe Baby Court  
Stacey Powell-District 60/Child Find  
Dana Richardson-Life Center Academy  
Veronica Ibarra-ELV  
Melissa Longoria-CDI/SCCOHS  
Maricela Palma-ECMS

- I. Introductions:** Meeting called to order by Renee at 11:11 am.
- II. Additions to the Agenda:** N/A
- III. Approval of Minutes:** Renee called for the approval of the November 2020 minutes as submitted. Hearing no additions or corrections, the November minutes were approved as submitted.
- IV. Agency Highlights:** Communities That Care  
Sarah Martinez (Pueblo Department of Health & Environment)  
Sarah presented Communities That Care power point. She stated she will provide updates from the last year.

#### Step 1:

- Engage Community Stakeholders
- Coalition currently has 45 members representing 32 agencies with a focus on preventing youth substance use with the assistance of youth advisors

#### Step 2:

- Look at local level data to determine priority areas (Healthy Kids Colorado Data) Pueblo County is one of the highest regularly use of marijuana in the state of Colorado (Academic performance measures from the Colorado Department of Education-CMAS scores)-Pueblo Youth academic scores lower than rest of the state
- Identify our risk and protective factors- Safety, Vaping, and Mental Health data  
Sarah stated they wanted to tackle academic success in school and how to provide more prosocial opportunities for young people.

#### Step 3:

- Implement community-wide, evidence based strategies-Creating safe and healthier youth friendly spaces (Funded bus passes for students to ride free), implementing a shared scooter system, improving child care early in life (0-5yrs): working with Children First and Health Solutions
  - Policy-Reallocation of existing fund to early childhood, change the zoning policy around childcare homes
  - Education-Increased knowledge related to safe and healthy environments
  - Built Environment-Increased high quality childcare slots

Sarah discussed the CFI's analysis performed a comprehensive scan proving expanding child care would boost Pueblo's economy with a \$35.5 million economic impact. She stated there is a brochure and she provided it in the chat and asked if everyone would share with friends. Sarah shared in 2021 they will be working with the county to reallocate marijuana excise tax into scholarships for child care fees for parents. She reports a creation of a county-wide map of licensed childcare providers containing age slots at the facility, participation in the food program, and curriculum that providers implement. Sarah was excited to announce the team was hosting a No Small Matter documentary on January 27 at 9AM via Zoom to promote early childhood to policy makers and immediately following a small panel of local experts for a discussion and questions.

## V. **New Business:**

### A. **Pueblo Workforce-COResponds**

Mark Valdez (Pueblo Workforce)

Mark stated CoResponds was a creation of disaster relief program with a priority on economically disadvantaged areas. The funds provided subsidized wages and fringe benefits for temporary jobs that provide humanitarian assistance or cleanup to help Colorado recover from the impact of COVID 19. He stated specifically, he works with anyone who lost their job or laid off, or permanently laid off, plant closure, long term unemployed, self-employed loss of job due to COVID 19.

- Proposed jobs: Contact tracers, temperature takers, sampling, site coordinators, sanitation of schools and homeless shelters, delivering meals to the vulnerable population, child care for disaster relief first responders following social distancing protocols and other positions critical to support Colorado response to COVID19

Individuals are eligible for up to 6 months of employment or 1040 hours or \$7200.00 in Pueblo County. He informed the council that marketing went out late last fall. Mark is working with SRDA, Meals on Wheels, RMSER, Pueblo County Division of Health and Human Services-food commodities, and Pueblo Community College-Health Screeners and clean up technicians that work with the labs at St. Mary Corwin. Mark stated a flyer is coming out soon. Angie stated anyone can contact Mark Valdez LES II/Business Development Representative at [Mark.S.Valdez@state.co.us](mailto:Mark.S.Valdez@state.co.us) or [Angela.Shehorn@pueblocc.edu](mailto:Angela.Shehorn@pueblocc.edu) with any questions.

### B. **Resource Sharing Day 2021**

Teresa Mathews (Children First)

Angie reported Resource Sharing Day 2021 is cancelled unfortunately due to PCC closure of school activities due to COVID. She stated she will keep everyone posted.

### C. **Social Media Presence**

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie stated a goal for Children First is to have a social media presence. She stated starting 2021 every week, typically on Friday's, a post will appear on PCC's Facebook page, with a variety of information regarding early childhood. She reported Children First is trying to get the word about the importance of early childhood through social media. Angie asked that everyone take a look and let her know your thoughts.

### D. **Preschool Policy Advisory**

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie states with the passing of Proposition EE as everyone knows there will be a great deal of money infused into early childhood through taxing of nicotine and vaping products specifically. She reports the PPA is in process of creating a plan and what it should look like and they are asking for local input. Angie stated if anyone would like to have a say on how Universal preschool will look in this community and across the state she advises anyone to join the Preschool Policy Advisory next meeting February 8, 2021 from 11 am to 1:30 pm. Email [stephanie@coloradokids.org](mailto:stephanie@coloradokids.org) to receive a zoom link. A discussion followed.

### E. **EQIT Course Update**

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie reported the EQIT course is up in the air this fall. It will depend on Pueblo Community College allowing the general public back into the building. She stated participants are generally not students of PCC. She informed everyone Children First will plan and advertise for the EQIT course

### **ECE College Courses**

Rene Gust (Pueblo Community College)

Renee updated enrollment has been difficult during COVID. She stated for the fall and the spring semester enrollment, at the last minute, surged due to how courses are delivered. She was happy to report the college only cancelled one ECE class. Renee stated pre-COVID they would cancel two classes a semester. 133 students this semester and 19 out of Fremont and Southwest. She reported linking courses helped to keep classes open. PCC FLEX classes log into class remotely and participate. She informed the council that students were using virtual environments to attend classes. Renee states it is evolving. She states hybrid classes, in class half the time, working from home more often, is working well. Renee reports the interest in online classes in Arts and Sciences has exploded. She stated bridging the gap between Fremont and Southwest classes has been great. Renee addressed Angie's question about an apprenticeship program at Red Rocks Community College relating to early childhood educators, with 306 education hours and 4000 hours of on the job training with an agreement between a child care center and the student. Renee stated PCC was involved in a type of mentorship program last year through the Early Milestones Early Childhood Workforce Innovation Grant. She stated students were sent out with a skilled instructor in a particular center. Renee stated three months was not enough time for the program. She will reach out to centers when grants come out. Discussion followed.

### **F. CDI Request**

Rhonda Duskey-Kochis (Southern Colorado Head Start)

Rhonda explains Community Development Institute Head Start is a private nonprofit corporation with a main office in Denver, with offices all over the nation, assigned by the office of Head Start to provide interim management. She stated the previous grantee is no longer in charge. She stated Head Start services are still alive and well in Centers in Pueblo, Trinidad, Walsenburg, Sanford, and Alamosa. Rhonda states with the aid of Melissa Longoria and Valerie Maldonado want to restructure what Head Start looks like in Pueblo. She stated they want to branch out in the Pueblo Community to serve families. Rhonda stated they are looking for child care partnerships or other facilities around the city to lease or purchase to start smaller centers. She stated in February parenting with Bright Beginnings in Pueblo West with one to three classrooms. She reported they are operating in Pueblo according to Covid restrictions. Rhonda stated Melissa is working on taking applications through CDI and in the process of getting licensed. Rhonda asked if anyone is interested or know of facilities wanting to partner with CDI please contact her at 719-251-3090 [rduskeykochis@sccohs.org](mailto:rduskeykochis@sccohs.org) . CDI will purchase and lease buildings now and manage Head Start anywhere from 1 to 6 to 12 years but eventually be open for grant application. Discussion pursued.

### **G. Request for Data: Parent Training Topics**

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie requests data information regarding parents needing specific trainings, topics such as medication administration. She asked if everyone would work with her with ideas for trainings that will help support families.

## **VI. Old Business:**

### **A. Children First Child Care Connections:**

Angie Shehorn (Children First)

Angie reports Children First, as of January 11, 2021, has a live Children First Child Care Connections website to aid parents searching for child care in Pueblo County. Parents' can search by location, transportation methods, (walking, driving, public transit system), and child care provider availability. She asked everyone to please share with parents. [www.childrenfirstco.org](http://www.childrenfirstco.org)

## **VII. Sub Groups: (subgroups); please read mission statement**

- A. Social Emotional – Lindsey Dunbar –** Lindsey stated Wendy and her took over chair roles after Gerald's transition to Safe Baby Court. She informed the group they had a meeting last month discussing training around mental health. She reported that she and the instructors have a meeting coming up to discuss what it will look like, new curriculum, and will still be taught virtually with full fidelity as well as safety. Lindsey stated there is a QPR training Wednesday from 11:30 am to 1 pm regarding mental health/first aid focusing on suicide prevention. Register by emailing Lindsey at [Dunbar@pueblocounty.us](mailto:Dunbar@pueblocounty.us) . Lindsey informed everyone of Wednesday's meeting from 1—2 pm via Zoom. She reports in last month's meeting as well as February's meeting they discussed resilience for children, providers, and families. She asked for ideas to promote messaging and create resources for centers and home providers. Discussion ensued.

- B. Early Care and Learning-** Rita Samora and Mari Palma- Mari stated at their last meeting they planned on quarterly meetings for their subgroup. They will have a Zoom meeting Wednesday, March 3, 2021, from 2 pm to 3 pm.
- C. Family Connects** –Emilee Alcon- Emilee reported they met in November because she had to cancel January’s meeting. She stated they meet every third Tuesday of the month and their next meeting will be February 16, 2021 at 2 pm via Zoom. If anyone is interested in attending please contact her. Emilee reported they are working on an article for the importance of fatherhood involvement in early childhood. She stated they are also working on a few flyers regarding fatherhood and literacy, and home visitation programs. She hopes by February they will have drafts available to review.
- D. Health and Wellness Advisory** - Pamela Doyle and Justin Gage –Pamela stated Justin and her planned a meeting for February 9, 2021 at 2 pm via Zoom. She will get the information out to Teresa. Justin stated they will discuss immunizations and developmental screening and are open to talk about anything. Pam stated they will send out an agenda.

**VIII. Community Reports:**

- **PDPHE** – Lindsey asked if anyone knows people 70 and older, who would like to get a COVID vaccine, can provide them the email [www.pueblohealth.org](http://www.pueblohealth.org) where they will fill out a form with their information to be added to a list and they will receive a call to get their vaccine. Any other questions call 719-583-4444. Angie asked if the participants need to be members of Pueblo County and Lindsey confirmed they do.

**IX. + and ▲ – (Plus/Delta Evaluation)** Paula stated there was great participation this month.

**X. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.

**XI. Next Meeting:** The next meeting is Monday, February 22, 2021 at 11:00 am. Location: Virtually via ZOOM

Respectfully submitted,  
Paula Arellano